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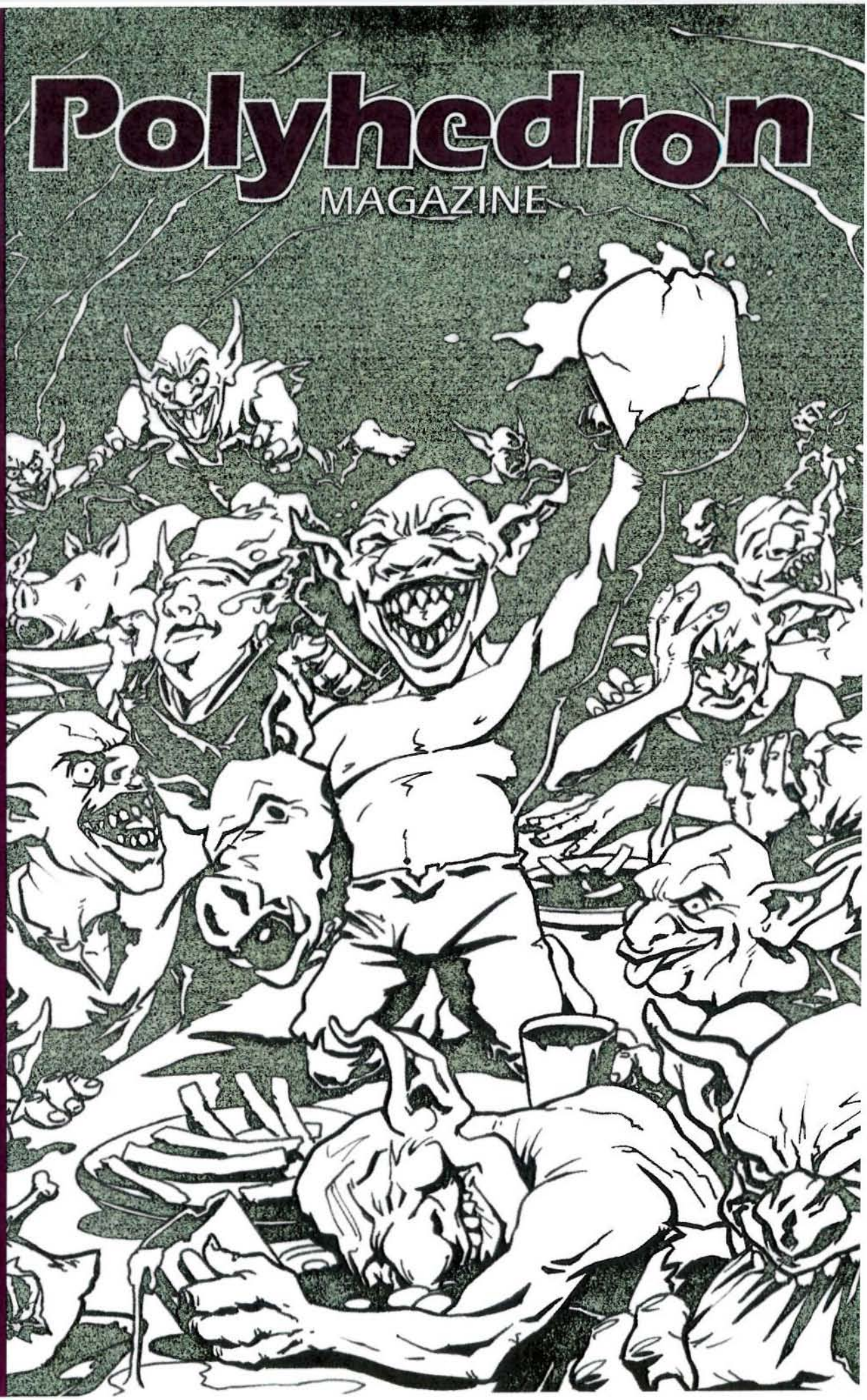
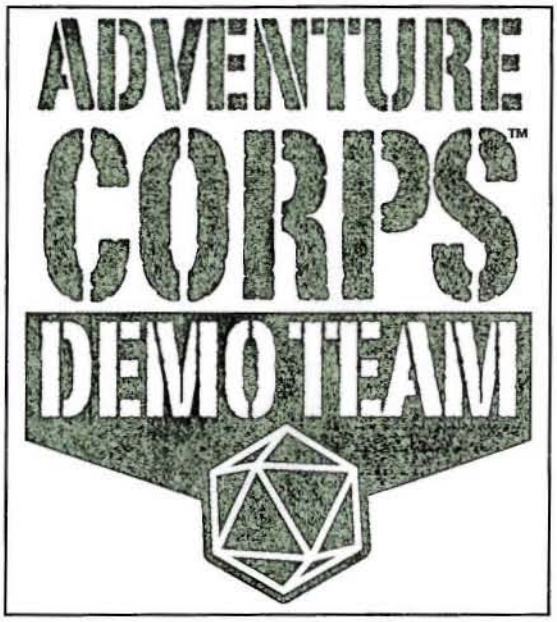


WE WANT YOU!

Are you the kind of person who would drive all night in the rain to get to a convention? Would you walk around the block to a game or book store? If you fall somewhere in between, and get excited about teaching our games when you get there, you may be who we're looking for.

We are now accepting applications for our new Adventure Corps Demonstration Teams. If you are 18 years of age or older, have reliable transportation, good teaching skills, and a love of the game and gaming, you could be eligible for all sorts of neat stuff as a member of our team. Interested? Please fill out the application below. Then, return it to our offices at: RPGA Demo Team Application, P.O. Box 707, Renton WA 98057. All serious applications will be considered, so don't miss out. The life you enrich may just be your own.



Name:_____ RPGA #:_____ SSN: _____
Address:_____ Birthdate: _____
City:_____ State:_____ Postal Code:_____
Country:_____ Day Phone:_____ Home Phone:_____
Email address: _____ Fax #:_____

Current Employer:_____ Supervisor Name: _____
Address:_____ Phone: _____
City:_____ State:_____ Postal Code: _____
Country:_____

1. How many conventions do you attend in a year?
❑ 0 ❑ 1-2 ❑ 3-4 ❑ 5-6 ❑ 7-8 ❑ 9-10 ❑ More than 10

2. How many conventions do you run games at (RPGA or otherwise)?
❑ 0 ❑ 1-2 ❑ 3-4 ❑ 5-6 ❑ 7-8 ❑ 9-10 ❑ More than 10

3. How many years have you been DMing in home games?
❑ 0 ❑ 1-2 ❑ 3-4 ❑ 5-6 ❑ 7-8 ❑ 9-10 ❑ More than 10

4. How many conventions could you run demos at in a year if you were accepted to the program? (This need not be the number you attend)
❑ 0 ❑ 1-2 ❑ 3-4 ❑ 5-6 ❑ 7-8 ❑ 9-10 ❑ More than 10

5. How many game stores are there within a one-hour drive of your home?
❑ 0 ❑ 1-2 ❑ 3-4 ❑ 5-6 ❑ 7-8 ❑ 9-10 ❑ More than 10

6. TSR makes three game systems, and we would expect you to be able to demo in at least two of them. Which of the following can you comfortably run a demo for now?
❑ AD&D® Game ❑ ALTERNITY® Science Fiction Role-playing Game ❑ SAGA® System

7. Which of the games that you do not know would you be willing to learn well enough to run demos for?
❑ AD&D Game ❑ ALTERNITY Science Fiction Role-playing Game ❑ SAGA System

8. Which of the following AD&D game worlds are you very familiar with the specifics of, enough so that you could run a demo?
❑ GREYHAWK® ❑ FORGOTTEN REALMS® ❑ RAVENLOFT®
❑ BIRTHRIGHT® ❑ PLANESCAPE® ❑ DRAGONLANCE®

Demo Qualification
Please check all of the following that apply to you:
❑ I am enthusiastic about representing TSR as an official Demo DM
❑ I am outgoing and can easily approach strangers to talk about TSR games
❑ I am good at explaining how to do things in ways that can be understood by beginners
❑ I have run game demos before
❑ I can handle four players in a demo easily
❑ I can handle up to eight players at a time easily, and give each one enough attention to ensure they learn the game

Generally we set New Year's Resolutions after the 1st of the year, but this can't wait. We have three new programs in 1999: ADVENTURE CORPS™ demo team (application opposite), National Roleplaying Championship, and Regional Director Re-org.

RPGA National Roleplaying Championship

This year we held the Best of the Best tournament at the GEN CON® Game Fair. We want it bigger. So, next year we start a National Roleplaying Championship, which will become a World Roleplaying Championship in 2000. You can qualify to enter in the following ways:

1. Each region, as defined for Regional Directors (see below) plus Australia, will have a number of seats. Players will be chosen for these seats through Regional Championship tournaments held anytime between Game Fairs. The number of seats depends on the number of tables of RPGA events run in the region from May 1st to April 30th, and will be announced at the Game Fair the year before. The total number of seats from Regional Championships is 58.
2. The Top 50 players (seven or more tournaments) in the Classic category will be invited to the National Championship. The Top 50 will be selected for the period May 1st to April 30th.
3. The winner of the previous National Championship tournament will be invited to defend the crown. For 1999, Saul Resnikoff will be invited, as he won the Best of the Best tournament.

Regional Directors will supervise the Regional Championship process and ensure fairness to all involved. Specific rules for Regional Championships shall be left to the regions, but the Regional Director and HQ must approve the rules for each region.

The championship tournament at the Game Fair will be a three-round classic tournament. The first round will have 108 possible participants, and advancements will be managed so that one table of the final is played to determine a champion.

The winner of the National Roleplaying Championship will receive a trip to the next year's GEN CON Game Fair including airfare, hotel, food allowance, admission, and six event tickets.

Regional Director Re-org

One RPGA strategy for 1999 is to strengthen the local contact for members, making the Network feel more like a club than an association. The current system of regional directors is not serving the Network for this purpose, however. Duties are undefined and regions do not always make sense, and thus the RDs are not empowered to be effective. To change this, we have re-defined the regions in groups of states where the players have larger crossover. The new regions will be:

Northeast: CT, MA, RI, VT, ME, NH, NJ, PA, NY
Mid-Atlantic: DE, D.C., MD, VA, WV
Southeast: FL, GA, SC, NC
Deep South: AR, LA, MS, KY, TN, AL
Midwest: MI, OH, IN, IL,
Northland: WI, MN, ND, SD
Great Plains: MO, NE, IA, KS, OK, TX
Mountain States: CO, UT, MT, WY
Southwest: CA, AZ, NM, NV, HI
Pacific Northwest: OR, WA, ID, Western Canada (British Columbia, Alberta), AK
Eastern and Central Canada

Regional Directors will be chosen for these regions through an application process. Below is a summary of the RD job; a full description is available from HQ for those who want to apply.

The Regional Director serves the RPGA by acting as a local member contact and coordinator of RPGA activities within the region. The RD should work to promote the RPGA in a positive light and to grow the roleplaying hobby.

The Regional Director will make sure the following duties are performed for his or her region. The RD need not do everything him- or herself; indeed HQ does not expect that of any RD.

1. Promote the RPGA within his or her region. This includes recruiting members, assisting conventions and stores with RPGA events, and working with clubs.
2. Serve as a primary source of information for regional RPGA activities.
3. Publish a bimonthly regional newsletter to keep members in the region informed. HQ will assist with printing and mailing of these newsletters.
4. Keep HQ informed of regional issues and concerns through regular contact.
5. Handle disputes between members in the region as necessary.
6. Oversee regional championships and other activities as directed by HQ.

Regional Directors are not expected to do all this work alone. RDs are encouraged to (and must) recruit volunteers to help cover the region's activity centers, and provide other support as needed (for example, a newsletter editor). These volunteers will receive Service Points from HQ and occasional free product. Volunteer selection will be at the RD's discretion, but HQ reserves the right to remove a volunteer for any reason.

We want RDs with enthusiasm about the RPGA Network and the roleplaying hobby, self-starting leaders who can form groups of assistants and manage them well, and who have email accounts with file transfer capability. RDs can run conventions, but must not use their position to hurt other conventions which compete with their own. The Network's interests must take precedence over the interests of any single convention.

For the responsibilities above, the RD will receive an annual stipend, free admission to the GEN CON Game Fair, free RPGA GUILD-LEVEL™ membership, and travel expenses to any RD gathering required by HQ.

All existing Regional Directors have been given the opportunity to apply. If you would like to apply, send a cover letter and resume to HQ (address on mailer cover). Think of it as a job application. Your resume should include work experience and gaming experience. Applications will be accepted until January 8th, at which point interviews will be conducted (as necessary) and RDs chosen.

The Cordon Bleu
TSR, Inc.

Floor Manager
Lisa Stevens

Grand Chef
Robert Wiese

Maitre D'
Tech Support: 800/324-6496

Wait Staff
Donna Woodcock
Paul Alan Timm

Dishwasher
Jeff Quick

Hi RPGA HQ's people!
I just finish reading the Poly #131, and I like the words from Robert. In the last two years I have given RPG classes in my University, and I agree deeply with his ideas about expanding and improvement of the roleplaying.

I remember a discussion about it on the net in the RPGA chat and news. The players really want to show the world that RPGs are not just a game or a hobby. Sometimes they are an art, a work, a healthy activity, something that makes us think, work hard, become readers, teachers, students, designers, writers, actors, dreamers, architects—and I'm not talking just about the players.

But we don't have all the tools we could have to accomplish Robert's ideas. Why? We have the ideas, "manpower" etc., but we don't have permission to do it.

Just try to use any art or phrase from the TSR books, and the next thing you need is a lawyer. Sometimes I am tired [of making] all the effort, and I think the RPGA is doing the same. I mean, how much help do we really receive from TSR? We at least BUY their books. Not only that, we actually WORK to make more people interested in RPGs, for free. We know that attitude helps the industry and finally helps us, but I want to make a suggestion.

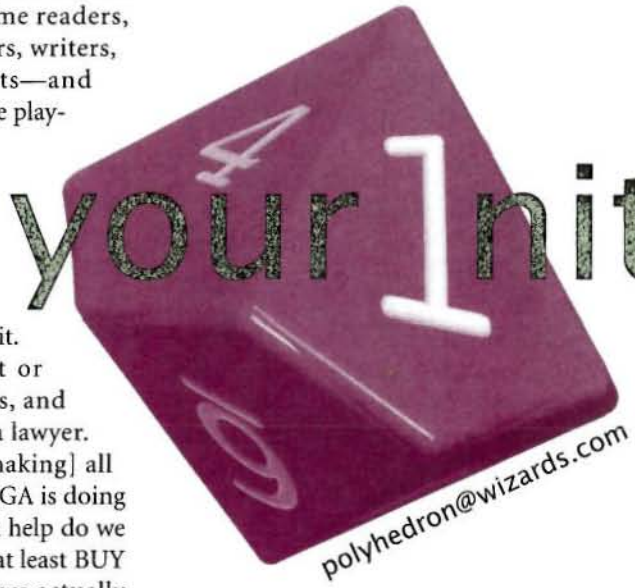
Trying to teach people to play without the oportunity of using the TSR material is very difficult. Maybe TSR could allow the use of their books and art for teaching, demo teams (like Robert says), learn-to-roleplay programs etc. That way I can make copies of the explanations about races, classes, or sometimes I can project a useful table. [Without] support or at least an official permission, I can't use that material.

My University was very hard to convince that RPGs were a good thing to teach. If I could use more TSR copyrighted material instead of my own hand made material, my look would become much more serious.

How are we going to "spread the word?" I can make my own versions of the articles, books, and arts. [But] what do you think about TSR selecting pages articles etc. from the books that we can use only for the purpose of teaching, or making demos, etc.?

I think we all like to make our game something better, making it more than just a "game," because it *is* more. But TSR sometimes looks like the enemy instead of a friend who needs our help to keep selling the game that we love.

Excuse my english; I hope I made myself clear enough.



Sincerely.
Alejandro Poli
Santiago, Chile

You're plenty clear Alejandro. I asked around to see what could be done about this. First, I encourage all educators to consult our web site <http://www.wizards.com/Corporate_Info/TSR_Online_Policy.html> to read our online policy. This will give you a feel for what we allow these days. There is also a "fair use" clause in U.S. copyright law which allows teachers to make copies for educational purposes. If you would like more specific information (teachers, please feel free), please contact our marvelous customer service people at *1-800/324-6496*. They can steer you in the next direction you need to go. PLEASE NOTE that I am not a lawyer, and CANNOT give legal advice.

Sir,

Regarding James Buchanan's letter in Poly 131 requesting an all-LC issue, could you please do two things.

One, warn the 80% of the membership who don't play LC ahead of time so we can avoid reading that issue, and two, balance any such issue with a NO LC issue the next time around.

Regards,

Wes Nicholson
Southwest Pacific RD

Oh, that Wes. Okay, here's the warning. June '99 is an all-LC issue. If you hate LC, go ahead and arrange to have an issue of *Cosmo* or *Motocross Monthly* or something handy instead. I personally believe it will be chock full of good stuff whether you're an LC fan or not, but we must all make our own choices.

While I'm thinking about it, here's the list of themes for 1999:

FEB: Politics
APR: Religion (the hot button topics!)
JUNE: LIVING CITY Spectacular!
AUG: Exploring the Unknown
OCT: Horror
DEC: Gods

Get crackin' all you would-be writers! Remember, more than one gamer has gotten his or her vault to big-time game writing through Polyhedron Magazine. Anybody heard of Eric Boyd? He started here. Lisa Stevens? She started here. Gary Gygax? Well, he's written for Poly, anyway. The next person could be YOU! Write! Write now!

COVER STORY: Pete Venters, Goblin King, gave us this rendition of goblinly goodness at a banquet. Mmm—Beefy!

Table Talk editorial

by Kevin W. Melka

Past & Present... Future?

Kevin Melka? Thought he was dead.

With all due respect to Snake Plisskin, I am very much alive. I might not be as active in the Network as in the past, but there is a view from the shadows. (It literally takes years to recover from being a Network employee.)

In any event, following this year's GEN CON® Game Fair and subsequent issues of POLYHEDRON® Magazine, I felt the need to voice an opinion in these pages regarding the Network, its membership, and to reflect a bit on the way things used to be.

Aluminum walker and Geritol aside, 14 years as a member of the RPGA teaches a gamer a few things. I can't brag a single or double digit membership number, but time has unceremoniously placed me in the "Old Guard" club. Were I to mention Halloween raw liver tosses, Mike Selinker's impression of *My Favorite Martin*, 50-page TIMEMASTER* events, or Steve slipping Jean a mickey, chances are you would say, "Huh?" So does age equal wisdom? Sometimes.

In the 80s and early 90s the Network was different. Geographical ownership aside, gaming has evolved considerably over the past few years. From some perspectives, the "old days" seemed simpler. Before the days of LIVING CITY™ and WotC, there was a time when fate and jollity was forged by the membership for the membership. To some, this has changed.

Circumstances like hateful player competition, avoiding cons without LC, and slot zeros did not exist. You could always count on seeing a multi-round event, or a backstabbing Paranoia scenario on the agenda of every convention. Were these happier times? Possibly. They were definitely less obstructive, and perhaps more fun for those who took part.

How does this compare? For good or ill, LIVING CITY has changed the face of the Network. Conventions now live or die at the mercy of these events and their ever-changing rules set down by HQ.

Smaller conventions, the lifeblood of the Network, have been hamstrung as a result. Inconsistent regulations regarding tournaments can also be the bane of convention organizers, which translates to fewer shows, and few members. How many would pay a yearly membership only to go to GEN CON? Not many. Are these wary words to live by? Maybe.

On the flip side, tournament authors have every reason to be ecstatic about the $100+ payment for written events. When Jean, Dave, and I designed the program years ago, we grudgingly settled for the paltry $35 per round dictated to us. As authors, we understood the time and effort that goes in to a tournament, and wanted more. Several proficient authors have emerged from the ranks of the RPGA, and this increase only helps to prove that as an organization we have some of the best writers around. On this front, cheers.

And Now, the Bad News.

I quote, "...we will issue a new kind of winner certificate (suitable for framing)..." Didn't we send this undead to the grave long ago? Show me one RPGA member over the age of 10 with a wall in their room devoted to framed certificates, and I'll show you a LIVING CITY player without a character binder. Better yet, the certificates allow those who win games to win more by adjusting rolls. I personally don't play LIVING CITY, so how does this benefit me? What if you judge and don't play? How does that justify the time and effort you put forward?

As someone who spent years of time and effort participating in Network events I am insulted. In the large scope to things, prize certificates are nothing. Less than 50% of them are ever redeemed, and they're one of the few things that give something back to the membership. Even if they were only redeemable at GEN CON Game Fair for membership renewals or for WotC's online store, that would be something. Dropping them down to $2 from $5 is preferable to using them as wallpaper or kindling. If an understaffed accounting department from a company that went bankrupt can deal with RPGA "funny money," I'm sure WotC's skilled staff is up to the challenge. An excuse? Perchance.

So what exactly does this all mean? Well, no matter which decade you call your own, one thing remains the same. You only get out of the RPGA what you put into it. So DO something. Whether you lead, follow, or protest is up to you. In the past, the Network's future was always driven by what the membership did in the present. The Network was a democracy of sorts (contrary to popular belief), with HQ fighting bitter battles for the betterment of the organization. Is that the case here? Or is it sliding into a "benevolent dictatorship?" That depends on your point of view.

And what of the guy many thought was dead? His membership lapses soon, and like many, he must decide whether to renew or not. What will he choose? What will you choose? If the Network grants you everything you desire in a gaming organization, that's great. If you're at least somewhat content with the present, do what you can to make the future better. Should none of the above apply, send a letter (or resume) to HQ and try to make it stronger. Don't give up too easily.

*Copyright Don Bingle, because if I didn't mention his name he would probably sue me.

Aluminum walker and Geritol aside, 14 years as a member of the RPGA teaches a gamer a few things.

photos by **Brandon Amancio**

Table Talk

History of The Company of Framed Adventurers by Klim Altman

The Company of Framed Adventurers first met in Manhattan, New York in September 1994. At that time none of us knew that this would become our team's name, nor the events that would make this name a perfect fit. The seven of us met to play what became an extremely challenging AD&D® campaign based in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting.

Most of the group had never met each other before that day, yet the campaign eventually spanned three years and tested the mettle and resolve of every player. The group would lose many of its original members only to grow stronger as a way to meet the campaign demands.

When our party was hunted throughout the Realms for crimes we did not commit, one of the members of the group altered the name "Company of *Famed* Adventurers" to better fit the group who truly were the **Company of Framed Adventurers**.

In April 1996 we first made a conscious decision to test our skills against the best teams in the world by entering the RPGA® AD&D Team Competition. We thought about the prizes and the "fame," but mostly it was the challenge of testing our skills against the best, that caused us to throw down the gauntlet.

Winning first place in our first team competition came as a shock to the group. We were showered with prizes and trophies, and flooded with good cheer.

In 1997 it was much more challenging to repeat our win. We were missing three players from the previous year's team. In fact, the players we found to take their places were recruited at the Safe House the night before the event. None of them had an RPGA number so the rush was on to sign them up and make it to the event. Our win in 1997 can only be attributed to individual skills of everyone on the team and their desire to win!

1998 saw our team at its strongest. Many members were seasoned veterans who refused to even speak about defeat. This was our year, and the traveling trophy would finally have a place to settle. But all of this served only to build the pressure—now our combined goal was in sight. We played our hearts out and finished the second part of the event just as the Coordinator came to pick up our packet. This year truly felt like a race run down to the wire!

This year's Company of Framed Adventurers and three-time AD&D Team Competition champions were (in alphabetical order): Klim Altman, Jeff Berg, Eric Friedlander, Jacob Harvey, William McCaig, and Richard Radnay. Our thanks go out to Jeff and Shalom West for their great refereeing during the event.

The triumphant 1998 Company of Framed Adventurers: (l to r) Klim Altman, Richard Radnay, Jacob Harvey, Andrew Coleman, Eric Friedlander, William McCaig, and Jeff Berg (not pictured here)

The Mid-American Gaming Convention Consortium by Robert Burns

What is M.A.G.iC.C.? M.A.G.iC.C. is a network of Gaming Conventions throughout the United States midwest, working together to increase gaming convention attendance across Mid-America. Our goal is simple: to make every member gaming convention as successful as possible.

We accomplish this by combining convention databases, individual experiences, rotating excess prize support, and working together so that our events do not occur on the same weekend. Information contained in our database ranges from artists to dealers, from attendees to companies that provide services at reasonable prices. This information is only shared among member conventions.

Your event MUST be a gaming convention, and you MUST donate a portion of the proceeds generated by the event to a charity of your choice. To request an aplication, please email <mytore@gamergod.force9.co.uk> or write to Robert E. Burns, M.A.G.iC.C. Administrator, PSC 50 Box 651, APO, AE 09494.

Normally we hold a M.A.G.iC.C. Meeting to discuss important issues at every member convention during off gameroom hours. If you are ready to become a member of this cutting edge team then contact us today. As long as you meet our prerequisites there is no cost involved. See more at the M.A.G.iC.C. web site: <http://members.tripod.com/~face_eater/magicc/>. ❑

NEXT ISSUE BOX

Next Poly, we'll do our first of a themed two-parter on bad conversation topics.

In February: Politics.

In April: Religion.

Hide the easily offended. The rest of you, start writing.

RPGA Top 50—The Best of the Best Proving Grounds

Campaign Players

Rank	Name	Avg Points/Games
1	Tom Jorgensen	25/9
2	Joey Masdon	24/15
3	Jean Rabe	24/10
3	Richard Marflak	24/10
5	Grant Bolling	23/11
6	Greg Sherwood	22/18
7	Lars Granrud	22/16
8	John Hinkle	22/10
9	James Leeson	22/9
10	Laurie Fox	22/7
11	David Quick	21/18
12	Chuck Wharton	21/17
13	Jeff Richards	21/12
13	Matthew J Brown	21/12
13	Paul W Dorothy	21/12
16	Dan Donnelly	21/9
16	Phil Tobin	21/9
16	Wayne A Gibson	21/9
19	Robert M Caldwell	21/8
19	David J Kelly	21/8
19	Mark Geary	21/8
22	Jeremy Gaffney	21/7
22	Kelly Harmon	21/7
22	Catherine McClurkin	21/7
25	Sherrie Masdon	20/16
25	Gail L Reese	20/16
25	Alan Eaton	20/16
28	Joe Iceman Pavlico	20/15
29	Erik Mona	20/14
29	Bob S Lauderdale	20/14
31	Peitor Murison	20/12
32	Rita E Wyers-Rivera	20/11
32	Hans Nelson	20/11
34	Victor Bushfield	20/10
34	Daniel A Brackmann	20/10
36	Matthew Studer	20/9
36	Aaron Downs	20/9
36	Catherine Kelly	20/9
36	Jeff W Byrd	20/9
40	Lori Swan	20/8
41	Brian O'Connell	20/7
41	Dennis Burdick	20/7
41	George Vellella	20/7
44	Brooks Banks	19/20
45	Gregg Peevers	19/19
46	Ivan Mulkeen	19/18
47	George Fulda	19/15
48	Alex Lombardi	19/14
49	Scott Buchan	19/13
49	Roger J Cherni	19/13

Classic Players

Rank	Name	Avg Points/Games
1	Eric Tam	24/7
2	Paul Bushland	23/10
3	Kevin W Kulp	23/7
4	Craig Walker	22/11
5	Ken Ritchart	22/7
6	Scott Dulac	21/9
7	Donald J Bingle	20/12
8	Randall W Lemon	20/9
9	David Baker	20/8
10	Tracey N Peart	20/7
11	Jonathan Naughton	19/14
12	Klim Altman	19/11
13	Robert Hobart	19/10
14	Laurie Fox	19/9
15	Michael Sanchez	19/7
15	Thomas Tabor	19/7
17	Mollie J Brewsaugh	18/10
18	Kevin Elmore	18/7
18	Steven T Helt	18/7
20	Robert Mason	17/10
20	Matt Lovell	17/10
22	Linda Bingle	17/9
23	Brett Bakke	17/7
23	James Calvin Kelley	17/7
25	Samuel E Sherry	16/11
26	Robin Vitti	16/8
27	Aerine R Caerwyn	16/7
28	Richard Bingle	15/12
29	Edward A Peterson	15/11
29	Bill Legate	15/11
31	William McCaig	15/9
31	Chad Patterson	15/9
33	Lee A Blankenship	15/8
34	Andrew Vanhooreweghe	15/7
34	Jack M Miller	15/7
34	Anise K Strong	15/7
34	David Nyman	15/7
34	Unknown Member	15/7
39	John Reynolds	14/10
39	Adam H Morse	14/10
41	Bill Sheffield	14/8
41	Suzanne Darrow	14/8
43	Glen R Goodwin	14/7
43	Douglas M Warren	14/7
45	Adam Smith	13/8
46	Linda J Rastle	13/7
47	Eric Friedlander	12/11
48	Gregory Dreher	12/10
49	Jesse Bvenlky	12/8

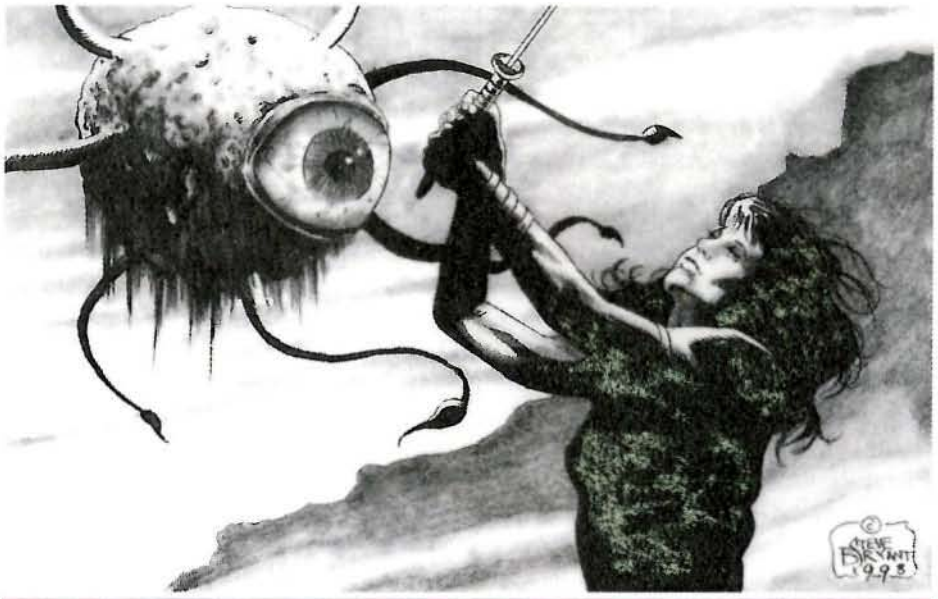
Judges

Rank	Name	Avg Points/Games
1	Heather Van Buren	177/16
2	Steve Hess	177/8
3	Jeffrey J Morrison	177/7
4	Chuck Wharton	176/8
5	Marc Silverman	175/8
5	Richard Dold	175/8
7	James R Wynen	173/13
8	Joel E Youngs	173/7
9	Thomas Prusa	172/17
10	Dameon Green	172/11
10	Alan Eaton	172/11
12	Joe Iceman Pavlico	171/12
13	Kenn Boyle	170/10
14	Vic Polites	170/8
15	Adam Norman	170/7
15	Chris Miller	170/7
17	Richard E Reiter III	169/12
18	Mark Somers	168/8
19	Bryan C Everitt	168/7
20	David Schnur	167/12
21	Keith W Hoffman	167/10
22	Marjorie E Duncan	167/7
23	Leonard S Dessert	166/14
24	Edward Gibson	166/7
24	Kimberly A Wetzel	166/7
26	Stephen Wales	165/11
27	Michael White	165/10
28	Matt Lovell	165/8
29	Brandon Kavanagh	164/18
30	John A Tomkins	164/9
31	Pat Connolly	164/8
31	George Fulda	164/8
33	Gail L Reese	164/7
34	Claire M Hoffman	163/12
35	Dan Donnelly	163/11
36	Sholom J West	163/9
37	John Vilandre	163/7
37	Grant Bolling	163/7
39	Gregg Peevers	162/14
40	Matt Langford	162/9
41	Tamara Sampson	162/8
42	Richard Dennis	161/11
43	Jason Nichols	161/8
44	Tony Calder	161/7
45	Gregory Dreher	160/15
46	Todd M McGovern	160/9
47	George Henion	160/8
48	Andrew Bean	160/7
49	Steven C Sampson	159/9
50	David Bujard	159/8

Elminster's Everwinking Eye

The Border Kingdoms

by Ed Greenwood



Manywaters

The old town of Manywaters lies east of the River Rith and just southwest of the Grand Duchy of Shantal—whose battered stone post stands two hundred

and forty paces outside its north gates.

Inside its low, tumbledown stone walls, Manywaters would be little more than a waystop village were it not for the Riven Healing House (a small temple of Ilmater), the wagonworks of Prezgulder Eeirin, and the Riven Rock from which flow the famous hot "healing" springs that give Manywaters its name.

Half a century ago, two adventuring bands decided to dwell by the restorative waters they'd heard about (unaware that many Borderers were spreading word of the springs to lure adventurers thence to dispatch the Rock ruler). They found Manywaters to be a monster-haunted ruin—under the control of a beholder.

A long and bitter battle ensued, ending in death for the eye tyrant, its servitors (the array of prowling monsters), and most of the two adventurer bands.

One of the sorely-wounded survivors collapsed in the pool formed by the waters flowing out of the Rock. In the morning she awakened whole, having not only failed to drown, but regained a missing arm and the flesh down one side of her body. Her enchanted armor had crumbled away to nothing, apparently dissolving in the waters.

Thus, Arlia Emmerlil stumbled onto the key to using the magic of Manywaters: it thoroughly heals those who enter the water, banishing insanity, diseases, curses, and parasitic infestations, while restoring lost, withered, or shattered body parts. It only accomplishes this miraculous healing by draining the stored magic of enchanted items worn or attached to a stricken being.

More than half a day's immersion is needed for most injuries, but creatures near death when put into the pool are kept alive even when their injuries (for example, a slit throat, or an inability to float) would ordinarily bring swift doom.

The pool won't affect more magic than it needs for a healing. Someone immersed in it with several magic items on his person will forever lose a random item—dissolved away—to heal anything from a minor cut or cold, up to a severe laceration and broken bones. Additional items will be dissolved for greater damage, but sometimes enchanted items are immersed in the pool and not altered in any way. Mysteriously, working items are often dredged up from its muck bottom.

Riven Rock's powers are of unknown origin. Some say Ilmater causes its healing, but others believe ancient wizardry gave the waters their powers long before the Broken God was heard of in Faerûn.

The waters lose all efficacy the instant they're removed from the pool, and lack all healing properties when rising through the Underdark to the surface; the Rock itself seems to grant the healing powers. (Priests forbid chipping at the Rock, but those who've done so discover its smooth black rock crumbles to dust when fragmented—and that no piece or dust of it retains the slightest magical aura or powers).

At the time of Arlia's healing, a priest of Ilmater (come to aid any of these latest adventurers who might've escaped the deathtrap of Manywaters) declared the site holy to the Broken God. The weary (but by now, healed) adventurers didn't argue. Instead, they struck a deal: a temple of Ilmater would be built on the spot, they'd see to its defenses against brigands, beasts, and the would-be tyrants who'd surely arrive once word spread of the real powers of the Rock, and the priests would feed, clothe, house, and nurse them to their dying days.

The deal was faithfully followed and the Riven Healing House founded (and vigorously defended, many times down

the years). Old Wynterlorn of the Serpents and then Arlia, hardiest of the Falcons, finally died in great old age, a tenday apart, a dozen years ago. Of all the adventurers, only one couple had offspring: a boy, Ilgirt Rhaulmallow, who could heal himself—slowly—at will, without the waters of Riven Rock Pool. Ilgirt left Manywaters to make his own life in the Realms (and has seen over twenty winters by now).

As the temple's size and reputation grew, the ruined houses of the old town (its origins and nature forgotten) were rebuilt by devout Ilmatari and a few farmers—whose long, narrow strip-farms still fan out west and south from Manywaters.

Today, the Riven Healing House is a high-pillared hall whose clergy heal anyone in return for fees. They use the money for the betterment of the sick and maimed who dwell in several interconnected buildings behind the temple. These souls will fiercely defend the priests without thought for their own lives. Animals with various hurts lope or stagger around as pets, and the whole religious compound is enclosed in a tree-girt wall that takes in (from front to rear) the temple, the "hurt houses," the Riven Rock with its pool, a small orchard and overgrown garden, and the abandoned adventurers' mansion. The priests sometimes rent the mansion by the month or tenday to adventurers or others desiring seclusion. Only guests deemed acceptable are allowed; brigands are unwelcome.

Any creature is allowed access to the pool—but those of known evil nature, such as beholders or drow, do so under the leveled menace of six staves of swarming insects, wielded by the most able members of "the Hurt."

The staves were taken by Arlia's band on their last adventuring expedition, from the tower of a mad Calishite mage. At least two of their Hurt wielders are wizards of middling level who came to enjoy life in the temple, and didn't want to be healed enough to have to leave.

Both mages always carry other, personal offensive magic items (types unknown). For particularly dangerous users of the waters, the old, shuffling House groundsman will unobtrusively attend, wearing one of the last treasures of the Serpents: a ring that stores four *blade barrier* spells he can call forth by silent act of will.

Riven Rock itself is a scalloped dome of smooth black rock, like an upturned bowl, about the size of a small cottage. Many fissures in its surface radiate outwards like the spokes of a wheel; out of these spring the rivulets of enchanted water. There are twenty-one streams, some about as large around as a burly man's arm, that recede to as few as seventeen in the hottest days of dry summers.

The Rock juts out into a pool that surrounds half of it, is about two hundred paces long on its Rockward shore, and describes a fairly regular semicircle from one corner of that shore to the other (at both corners flights of stone steps descend into the pool, which is four to five feet deep, but eight feet in the center). At its widest, the pool is 40' across.

The waters of Riven Rock Pool resist all natural and magical attempts to part it, boil, drain, or pump it out. Small amounts can be removed in containers, on objects immersed in it, and in cupped hands. Many mages have carried off pool waters in enchanted containers. But these waters never retain their healing powers, no matter what enchantments are cast on the container.

Across the road from the temple gates stands Manywheels, the shop of Prezgulder Eeirin, where six or more new wagons are always standing ready for purchase, along with about forty spare axles, tonguebars, and wheels of various sizes. Sets of harness are also available; Prezgulder caters not just to wagon buyers, but to passing travelers who need wagon repairs; he'll modify parts with speed and expertise, no matter what the hour. His stock and skills have saved many a trader from having to buy a train of pack animals and abandon a broken wagon somewhere in the Border Kingdoms. Prezgulder's prices are high, but most clients are happy to pay. Those who aren't seldom argue loudly, because sixteen brawny wagonbuilders work at Manywheels. About half are on duty at a time, and all keep cocked and loaded crossbows within reach.

Manywaters has a farmers' market, a scribe, carpenter, butcher, blacksmith, and corvisor (shoemaker). A mile down an up-hill-and-down lane is a tanner.

"Ah yes, good old Manywaters. I murdered my first sorceress there."

—Ghuldribrand Mroster

Mage Royal of Zindalankh

In conversation with Volo

Year of the Arch

Folk desiring to stop over in Manywaters can stay at the local inn and tavern, The Rock In The Water (Good/Cheap). Its fat, much-perspiring owner, Tulbut Gustable (NG hm F2), is a trove of local lore.

City Stories

The Furrier's Guild

by James P. Buchanan

On the outside grows the furside,

on the inside grows the skinside.

So the furside is the outside,

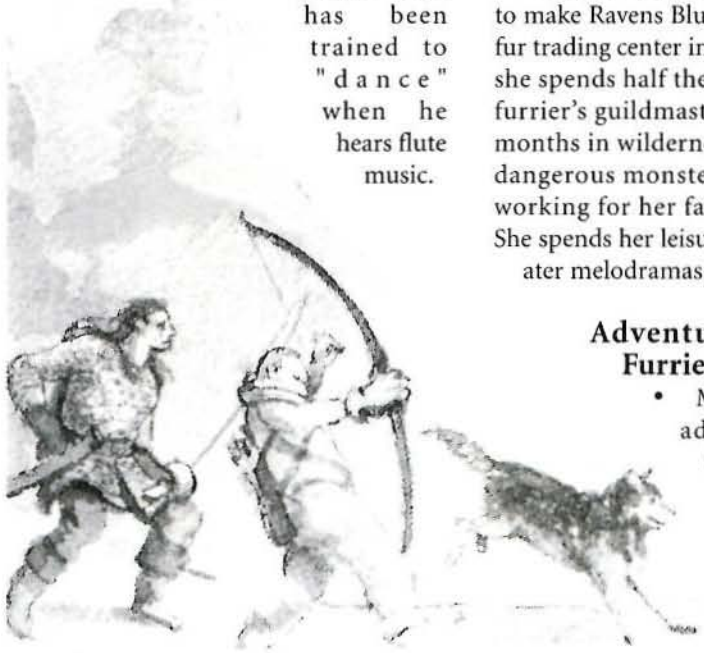
and the skinside is the inside.

Herbert George Fonting ~ 1871-1935

Vivia "Poacher's Foe" Stuyvesant Furrier's Guildmaster

Half-Elf Female 9th-Level Fighter
Alignment: Lawful Good
Age: 175 (appears 20)
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 175 lbs.
Hair: Auburn
Eyes: Hazel

Mount: Dapple-gray heavy war horse named Incitatus: Incitatus wears *horseshoes of a zephyr* and has been trained to "dance" when he hears flute music.



Appearance: Vivia has a slender, muscular physique. When staying in Ravens Bluff, Vivia wears a beehive-shaped bonnet, silk shirt, short coat, long skirt, fur-topped boots, and keeps her hair in a ponytail.

When hunting monsters, she wears form fitting clothing and armor. Vivia protects her head with a great glass helm enchanted with *glassteel* and keeps her hair in a chignon.

Background: Vivia Stuyvesant was born into a family long established in the fur trade. Vivia's mother and father made sure their older sons and younger daughter learned all about the fur trade. Thus, through a number of two- to four-year abbreviated apprenticeships, she learned the fundamentals of working as a trapper, a raw fur appraiser, a boat guard, a fur clothing tailor, and fur salesclerk. Vivia's most acknowledged accomplishment happened when two half-orc poachers tried to sell her a unicorn's hide and horn. She knocked the half-orcs unconscious and turned them over to a party of high-level druids and rangers, gaining her the nickname, Poacher's Foe.

Right now, Vivia's long range goal is to make Ravens Bluff the most profitable fur trading center in the Vast. To this end, she spends half the year working as the furrier's guildmaster, and the other six months in wilderness areas eliminating dangerous monsters that kill trappers working for her family's fur company. She spends her leisure time enjoying theater melodramas.

Adventure Ideas for the Furrier's Guild

- Most experienced adventuring brotherhoods buy their cold-weather clothing exclusively from the Stuyvesant Fur Company. (Vivia's older brothers administer the family fur business.) While the PCs shop for fur garments, they may encounter Vivia, who in turn may hire the party for missions outlined below.

- Fur companies could hire the PCs as Voyageurs. Their first three month tour begins with transporting crafted items to frontier forts or fur depots for trade. During these trips, the PCs help Vivia and other NPC buyers barter for raw fur skins from trappers. Attentive PCs could get information about uncharted areas of the Realms from trappers who search these places for furs.

For example, wealthy NPCs could hire the party to assist these trappers in hunting dangerous fur-bearing monsters. Also, trappers have found many ruins from past civilizations that they leave for adventurers to explore. Bandits attempting to hijack the furs can make players' lives interesting. After working as Voyageurs for two or three years, the party may get enough experience in the fur industry to set up their own business.

- Either the Lord Mayor or Vivia Stuyvesant hires the PCs to unmask poachers and furriers who buy the skins of protected animals and monsters. These poachers could be anything from zero-level humans hunting eagles in the cliffs above Ravens Bluff to Drow nobles attempting to sell an intact ki-rin pelt.

- Player characters may be hired to track down people who break a city's animal cruelty laws. For example, evil furriers could use a "Collar of Regeneration," a magic collar that functions as a *ring of regeneration*. With this magic item, any fur bearing animals or monsters can be skinned once a day for months or even years. The PCs must stop this illegal, although profitable, business practice. ❑

Stench Cow recipes!

lower plane favorites from our family to yours.

by William James Cuffe

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Baator, Lower Planes
FREQUENCY: Common (Baator) to Uncommon
ORGANIZATION: Herd
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Day
DIET: Herbivorous
INTELLIGENCE: Animal (1)
TREASURE: Nil
ALIGNMENT: Neutral

No. APPEARING: 15-60
ARMOR CLASS: 2
MOVE: 15"
HIT DICE: 3+3
THAC0: 17
No. of ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Nil
SIZE: L (10' to 12')
MORALE: Unsteady (5-7)
XP VALUE: 450

Stench kine resemble huge, misshapen bison. Bulls have large humps over the shoulders, and cows have smaller ones. Horns are long and downward curving. Heads are huge with pugged features, large round eyes, and lolling tongues. Coloration is dull orange with greenish, matted manes.

Combat: Stench bulls have at least 6 points per hit die and never do fewer than 5 points of damage. They are treated as monsters of 6 hit dice with a THAC0 of 13. If any stench cow charges to attack and hits, damage is doubled (at least 10 points for a bull), and another to-hit roll is made for trampling, which causes 2d6 points of additional damage if successful. Charging requires at least a 12' move. In general, only bulls charge unless the herd is cornered. Stench calves do not attack.

Stench kine are immune to all forms of (including magical) cold, fire, poison, and poisonous gas. In close quarters, the odor of their breath and bodies is so foul that a saving throw vs. poison must be made, or individuals are affected as if struck by a *stinking cloud* spell. This check must be made every 3 rounds of exposure for those unaffected by the smell.

Habitat/Society: Much like common herd animals, the odorous beasts form great herds. A herd contains 5-30 young. For every 5 mature beasts encountered, 1 will be a bull.

Ecology: Stench kine are the cattle of Baator. They roam the reeking plains, fiery fields, and even the wintry wastes of the lower planes. Some are found as far as Acheron, Gehenna, and even the Grey Waste, grazing on the noxious and poisonous growth of the vile terrain such as bloodthorn and stinkweed.

SHEPARD'S PIE

3 pounds potatoes, mashed
2 cups cut up larvae or stench kine
1 tablesp. flour
2 tablesp. fat or salad oil
Leftover gravy
6 small onions, cooked, drained
1 cup cooked quartered carrots, drained
1 cup cooked peas, drained
1 abrian egg, beaten

Grease 1 qt. casserole. Prepare mashed potatoes. Start heating oven.

In bowl, lightly roll meat in flour until coated. In hot fat and skillet, brown meat lightly. Add 2 cups leftover gravy (or as much gravy as on hand, adding enough hot Styx water to make 2 cups in all; season to taste; thicken if necessary). Add onions, car rots, peas. Heat; then pour into casserole.

Fold abrian egg into potatoes; arrange in ring on top of meat. Bake until gravy bubbles and potato ring is light golden brown – about 10 to 15 min. Makes 4 servings.

(DM's Dark: 1 serving bestows a temporary +1 bonus to Constitution for 24 hours upon the brave diner.)

STENCHBURGERS

1 lb. chuck stench kine, ground once
1/2 cup aged Limburger cheese, crumbled
1 teasp. salt
1/2 teasp. pepper
2 tablesp. minced onion
1 clove garlic

Press clove of garlic; collect oil in bowl. Mince onion and place in bowl; soak for 1 hr. Grind pressed garlic with mortar and pestle. Toss meat lightly with salt, pepper, onion, garlic (attempt to keep handling of mixture to a minimum).

With kitchen fork, using as little pressure as possible, divide meat; gently flatten loosely into 4 thick patties, 31/2" x 1/2". Cook in one of three ways, drizzling garlic oil periodically over patties:

Skillet-cooked: Heat 2 tbsp. fat or salad oil or on griddle. Cook patties until done to your taste. Do not flatten or patties with spatula unless still moving—it presses out the juices.

If patties are thick, allow 4 to 8 min. over medium heat, turning once. Serves 4 to 8.

(DM's Dark: 1 stenchburger grants a +1 bonus to saves vs. poisonous gas attacks for a period of 24 hours.)

TASSINGER'S

> Okay chummers, I pulled this little article from the June 2058 issue of Seattle Gastronomic. Check it out. Tassinger's has been in Bellevue for a few months now, but already it's the toast of the town for upper-class types. In fact, they're talking about opening another place in Everett. There's a lot to be said for it, and a lot to be hinted against it. As always, feel free to chime in with your own opinions. Since the article itself is from Seattle Gastronomic, they're the ones who'll take exception if you slip in false information. 'Course, it might take them time to find out about it, since I didn't tell them I downloaded this article for Shadowland.
> Sysop Servant

Tassinger's (#12J)
Large Restaurant Archetype/Main Street & 107th Avenue
NE/Thomas M. Tassinger, Owner/No Racial Bias/LTG# 9206 (78-8361)

TASSINGER'S: A RESTAURANT FOR THE 22nd CENTURY

No other restaurant in Seattle, or in the world, so far as we know, so skillfully merges the demands of elegance with adaptation to modern technology, blending the two into one perfect synthesis of beauty and electronics. Tassinger's is a beautiful two-story marble building along Main Street in Bellevue: a fitting location for such an elegant structure. Twin columns of rich, deep blue pure marble frame the main entrance, while the outside lights have bulbs formed in the shape of flames. The flickering orange light they give off at night casts awe-inspiring shadows from both those columns and the famed Circuitry Fountain as well.

The Circuitry Fountain sits on the lawn in front of the building, to one's left. Many places set up large public fountains in this general spot, but Tassinger's has chosen a different replacement: a great mass of wires with insulation in a score of brilliant colors, set up in such a manner as to suggest a multicolored waterfall. The amount of work required to produce such a work of art is staggering, particularly since each individual wire is completely encased in glass or acrylics, catching the light of the sun or outdoor lights to produce a glittering display unparalleled in the history of the world.

> Gee, you'd think whoever wrote this article could think of something nice to say about the place.
> Shaggy

> All right, let's get down to the dirt. This guy says that the doorway is framed by columns of pure, blue marble. I'm no geologist, but I've got mage and shaman friends who've learned all there is to know on the subject while hunting down raw materials for fetishes and stuff, and according to both them and geological science, there ain't no such thing as pure blue marble! Pure marble's white. It only comes in other colors when impurities are mixed in. What the frag are those columns really made of?
> Shaman's Sidekick

This outdoor visual beauty makes Tassinger's a major asset to the community of Bellevue even for those who never enter the building. Just looking at this restaurant from the outside is a treat, particularly at night, when the aura of the softly-flickering outdoor lights and the crystalline gleam of their reflection off the Circuitry Fountain creates an ambiance that lends itself readily to strolling, sightseeing, or other nocturnal activities.

> Yeah, there's nothing like mugging someone in the gleam of the Circuitry Fountain to make your evening. Or so I've heard.
> Bellevue Brawler

Once inside, the guest—"customer" seems too mundane a word—has stepped into a fairy tale. Magnificent oil paintings and fine tapestries cover the walls, while the oaken doorways are carved to resemble scrollwork. The tables and chairs bear similar scrollwork carvings, while the cushioned seats of each chair provide the ultimate in comfort. The entire dining room, including a half-dozen private alcoves one in each corner, is lit by a vast array of electric lights in the form of gold and silver chandeliers. On short notice, the staff can install bulbs of brilliant colors, to provide a flickering array of ever-changing hues to light up those truly special occasions. Semi-transparent plastic walls allow the light to shine directly through to the private alcoves, casting an array of rainbow colors over the diners.

> That must mean that the customers—such mundane words serve lowlifes like me—have to wait one fraggin' long time to be served.
> Shaggy

> You wish. Read on.
> Sysop Servant

The dining room tables are as luxurious as those of any royal court in the world. But only after the guests sit down do they discover Tassinger's is also on the

A RESTAURANT FOR THE 22nd CENTURY

by Gregory W. Detwiler

cutting-edge of computer technology. At each seating point on the table, the scrollwork along the rim slides up to reveal a keyboard and monitor. Guests log on to discover an electronic menu with a complete listing of food and drink, which even designates out of stock items, on those rare occasions. Each guest can enter his or her order simultaneously, with no more than a ten minute wait before a waiter emerges from the kitchen with everyone's order.

>No more than ten minutes to fill orders? How do they do it?
>Eatery Entrepreneur

> So you log onto their computer to order, huh. Hmm. I wonder if a "guest" could hack their files, while waiting for dinner.
> Decker in a Blue Dress

> I heard of one poor slag who tried it and got caught. The "guest" database supposedly only has food and drink files. Records are on a different system, and according to some indications, they might even be on a stand-alone. Oh yeah, the chummer who got caught was escorted into a back room by some thugs wearing the same uniform as the waiters. That was two weeks ago, and he hasn't shown up since.
> Sysop Servant

> The security goons are dressed like the waiters? How can you tell them apart?
> Moll Fisher

> You can't.
> Sysop Servant

A ten-minute wait is not much by the standards of most fine restaurants, but even this seems excessive compared to Tassinger's "Orichalchum customers." Members of this private club receive a password allowing them access to Tassinger's computer and electronic menu from their homes, offices, or any other place. They can make reservations via computer or even order dinner in advance, so it will be ready at the table upon arrival. Orichalchum customers guard their privileges carefully. In the months that Tassinger's has been in business an orichalchum customer has never leaked the code.

> It helps that the restaurant lets all orichalchum customers know the penalty for blabbing the code. Someone who reveals the code is permanently banned from Tassinger's, with his or her name and picture on file with security and the computer trained to sound the alarm if he so much as steps through the door.

To top that, Tassinger's has a unique reprisal policy. Tassinger's shows its community spirit by sending an electronic memo to every bank, insurance company, store, and restaurant in the city revealing the former customer's untrustworthiness. Not everybody cares, but you'll be under a cloud of suspicion in many reputable places. And if your payments are the least bit irregular, you'll find yourself behind bars in short order. Oh, did I forget to mention that one of those "community service announcements" is also sent to Lone Star? One should always help the police by targeting potential troublemakers in advance, after all.
> Sysop Servant

> Reprisal? Massive retaliation is more like it.
> Infiltrator

Having read of the charming ambiance of Tassinger's and the virtual esprit de corps of its favored customers, the reader is no doubt aching to learn about the food. Three words describe it: nectar and ambrosia. The cooking at Tassinger's is that of the finest restaurants, and Tassinger's keeps its secrets. Aside from inspections from the Board of Health, no one is allowed into their kitchens. It would spoil the mystery!

> Fast, fine cooking. Curiouser and curiouser.
> Eatery Entrepreneur

It must be all right if the Board of Health said it was okay.
> Decker in a Blue Dress

> Yes, AND Governor Schultz is an ideal servant of the people!
> Shaggy

As for cuisine, Tassinger's serves the finest foods from all over the world. French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Confederate Cajun, Aztlan, and a wide variety of other dishes are on the menu, while their wine cellar is almost inhumanly well stocked. Elegant meals begin and end at Tassinger's.

> If these fraggers serve food from all over the world, they must have some interesting suppliers.
> Decker in a Blue Dress

> As a matter of fact, some of their suppliers are runners like me. Paranimal flesh like the gila demon and the peryton aren't served on a regular basis, but occasionally their orichalchum types get it on special. And by occasionally, I mean when I or one of my co-workers gets the critter in a gunsight.
> Eatery Entrepreneur

> Paranimal seafood's a big thing as well. If you ever order megalodon sharkfin soup at Tassinger's, I'm probably the one who supplied the raw materials.
> Moll Fisher

> You supplied it? Who was holding the assault cannon?
> Noah's Ork

> Stall the personality conflicts. You're saying Tassinger's is hiring runners to hunt down edible paranimals? Where do you sign up?
> Challenger

> The tried-and-true method of going in through the servants' entrance will put you face-to-face with Mr. Lambert. And you'd better call him Mister. He's a three-meter-tall troll with a pair of Ruger Super Warhawks in twin shoulder holsters under his tux. He does all the hiring for the shadows. I suspect he's spent time there himself.
> Eatery Entrepreneur

> 0kay, we know the sec guards double as waiters, and they hire runners to supply their most exotic dishes. What about the rest of the staff? Cooks, janitors, stuff like that? Has anybody seen them?
> Shaggy

> Nope. They don't even send a waiter to your table with the check. At the sound of a beep, your bill's flashed on your table monitor, and the keyboard has a slot for your credstick. And like Seattle Gastronomic says, nobody's ever seen the cooks.
> Sysop Servant

> A minibus enters the loading dock right before the working shift changes, delivering new workers and taking the old ones home. The doors close before this happens, so you can't even get a glimpse of who's doing the cooking. I tried to get a look—Mr. Lambert nearly blew my head off. The minibus doesn't go straight home either, it zigzags all over Bellevue, and sometimes enters other neighborhoods, just to lose tails.
> Infiltrator

> So none of the workers actually live on the second floor?
> Decker in a Blue Dress

> The entire upper floor is Tommy Tassinger's private home, all decked out like a luxury hotel suite. He lives there with his wife and two children. Security guards hustle them in and out of the limo so fast that no one can get a good look at them, but I think the wife might have red hair. Once they didn't close the drapes in time to keep me from seeing something that looked a lot like a hermetic circle.
> Sysop Servant

> So Tommy Tassinger's a mage, too?
> Infiltrator

> How do you know his wife's not the mage?
> Decker in a Blue Dress

> If you want to find out what's going on over there, forget about spying on the place and just eat there often enough to qualify for that orichalchum drek. That should get you more special privileges than ordering via remote.Who knows what you'll really learn...
> Noah's Ork

Gaming Hooks

First and foremost, Tassinger's is a place of mystery. Who's the real force behind its founding? Where does it get pure, blue marble? Where does it get its fine foods? And for that matter, where does it get cooks? These mysteries can only be solved by some heavy-duty shadowrunning.

Tassinger's inhumanly swift and efficient service and unknown cooking methods also bear investigation. One way to find out is, of course, to sneak or break into the place after hours with all the risks of getting caught. Those runners who are more subtle might prefer instead to have a quiet chat with the Seattle Board of Health inspectors. This, however, can also mean investigating the inspectors, checking on their backgrounds to see if they have a tendency to take some nuyen under the table or if they were under control by spell or blackmail.

Runners who can afford to eat at Tassinger's might do well to scope it out first. Even relatively poor runners might receive a loan or stipend from Seattle's other restaurants to check out the competition. Who would be paying for runs against Tassinger's in the first place? Spying on the Tassinger family, Mr. Lambert, or the mysterious cooks could also be financed by jealous restaurateurs who want dirt on the enemy. Just remember that people caught pulling anything in Tassinger's have a disturbing tendency to disappear.

If anyone plans on eating at Tassinger's often enough to gain membership in the orichalchum club to leak the menu computer's access code to somebody else is in worlds of danger. Anyone caught doing that—and they will be caught—becomes an immediate pariah, not just in Tassinger's, but in all of Seattle. Roleplaying sessions as you struggle in vain to get a bank loan could be interesting, but being a marked man or woman by all the powers that be in Seattle (including Lone Star) can cramp one's style. If you leak the access code for money, it had better be enough money to enable you to leave Seattle immediately and settle down far away.

Besides all the nasty things that can happen to runners who go up against Tassinger's, nasty things can also happen to runners who work for the place. Ambitious hunting or fishing expeditions for the ultimate delicacies can be carried out for Tassinger's, and perhaps even financed by them. Dragon meat is so scarce that some runners have taken permanent orichalchum membership as payment. A captured great dragon could bring benefit to an entire group of people.

True, dragons are sentient creatures... but what happens to those sorry runners who get caught snooping around the place? Various accounts of cannibals seem to indicate that human flesh tastes like veal or beef. With metahumans, dragons, and more, who knows? Maybe elves, orks, and the others taste like chicken and ham. Maybe Tassinger's is a cover for something much worse than elitists. Enjoy your meal.

Few concepts in western culture evoke more revulsion and utter horror than anthropophagy (better known as "cannibalism").

To Serve Man

Recipes in Anthropophagy for *Call of Cthulhu* by Michael L. Howard

The act of consuming human flesh is considered one of the ultimate acts of human depravity, relegating the practitioner to the level of the animals. Of all social taboos, cannibalism is one of the most pervasive throughout the various cultures in the world.

As a culture which considers itself civilized, feelings of unease are immediately inspired by the mere concept of cannibalism. This act, which is inspired either by the instinctive drive to survive at any cost or by what we might consider a lack of conscious or even brazen depravity, makes it a perfect subject for use in the horror genre of games, especially for *Call of Cthulhu*.

The Whispered Past

The word cannibal is derived from the Spanish explorers, as the name assigned to a particular tribe of Carib natives, who lived in the West Indies in the time of the first Spanish explorations in the New World. It was rumored that this tribe engaged in gruesome practices; among these practices was the consumption of human flesh. The Spanish explorers knew this tribe as the Canibales.

Anthropologists, archeologists and social historians continue to debate the issue of how widespread or even whether the practice of cannibalism ever truly existed at all, other than in scattered incidences. The issue that all sides in the cannibalism dispute seem to agree on is that there must be two primary causes that induce individuals or entire cultures to partake in such acts of depravity.

Nutritional Cannibalism

The first causality is nutritional cannibalism. As humans increased in numbers, primitive people migrated, spreading themselves across vast continents with widely varied climates. Humanity was challenged by the local environment to find food for the populace. The wrath of nature could be extreme, especially when nomadic peoples traveled into unfamiliar lands, where they did not know what to expect of their surroundings. Also, once settled, the local climate could change drastically across seasons or even just a few years, throwing local food and water supplies into question.

In tribes or cultures which depended upon a steady supply of meat, such as in arctic and sub-arctic climates, low stocks of prey or poor hunts could result in a reduction of the protein intake. In cold climates where agriculture was nearly impossible, even a small reduction could have drastic consequences and quickly lead to starvation and death. In cultures that were advanced enough and where the local climate and terrain led to the luxury of the establishment of farming and food-gathering traditions, even one year of poor yields could spell doom for the populace.

With low food reserves, human beings, who have a strong self-preservation instinct, would begin to search for other

sources of nourishment, and when those were used up, there were few alternatives left to primitive peoples. Eventually they would turn to the dead and the dying, seeking nourishment. And if times were bad enough, they might turn to even more drastic ways of obtaining food. There is ample evidence that the Anazazi natives of the American Southwest, when droughts strangled their tenuous agricultural practices, turned on one another for survival. Could the revulsion of these acts be the reason that later tribes who established their culture in the same vicinity, feared to even look on their dead? Were they fearful of their hunger overtaking them in desperate times? Some tribal cultures of the desert southwest are so fearful of death that it is considered taboo to even speak the name of someone who has passed on.

Nutritional cannibalism is not a phenomenon restricted to our ancient past or to what we might call primitive cultures. The desperate drive of hunger has led to instances of cannibalism even within recent human history. The instances of the Donner party in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California and the Uruguayan soccer team in the Chilean Andes are two well known examples of the driving pain of hunger overcoming moral qualms about the sanctity of human life and reverence for the dead.

Ritualistic Cannibalism

The second causality is known as ritual cannibalism, which, to a certain extent, still exists in remote regions of the world. Ritual cannibalism refers to the consumption of human flesh in order to obtain knowledge, to commune with the dead, to exhibit our superiority over an enemy or for perhaps more obscure and devious reasons. Experts hypothesize that ritualistic cannibalism has always been far more common than nutritional cannibalism.

Anthropologists who have studied cannibalism have gathered a broad variety of data on what purposes drove this ritualistic practice. In early cultures, the concept of ancestor worship was widely spread, and it was thought that if you consumed the flesh of another person, you could commune with their spirit. Some early humans believed that if you

ate the muscles of a great warrior, you might take some of their physical strength or their bravery into yourself. Others believed that if you consumed certain organs, where the mind or soul was thought to reside (and these varied widely among different cultures), you could obtain the knowledge of the deceased, perhaps controlling their very spirit. This concept has inspired cults and ritualistic practices across human history.

This belief was thought to have driven the cannibalistic practices of early Egyptians. In fact, anthropologists surmise that the introduction of embalming and mummification, practiced during the various dynasties of the Nile Valley, were an attempt to prevent cannibalism. Dynastic Egyptians believed that the body must be preserved for use in the next life. Therefore all of the major organs were removed and stored so that they would not decay. The heart was thought to contain the soul and therefore was preserved separately in its own container. However, the brain was thought to have been unimportant waste. It was usually drawn out through the nose with a hook and disposed of. The empty cavity of the head was then filled with straw. At first, the embalming practices of the Egyptians were reserved for the pharaoh and the remainder of the court, but the secrets of the practice slowly leaked out to the masses. Within generations only those who could not afford the herbs and other materials necessary for the embalming process were condemned to oblivion. A byproduct of embalming was that the materials used in the preservation left the flesh less appealing to insects, scavengers and hungry relatives alike.

Another type of ritualistic cannibalism involved consuming the body in order to show superiority over enemies. Primitive peoples believed that if the body was consumed, the spirit had no place to rest and would be dispersed or perhaps consumed with the body. The consumption of your soul was a repellant thought to primitive peoples, the ultimate act of condemnation and destruction. This particular practice was very common among the Aztecs, who made offerings of blood to their pantheon of gods. The victims were usually either proffered by the devout populace, but were more commonly prisoners and defeated warriors of rival clans. The meat left over from these blood sacrifices was thought to have been distributed to the populace for consumption. The goal was to utterly destroy the body and soul of the enemy.

Setting the Table

Now that the historical matter has been digested, get ready to sink your teeth into crafting your own horrific scenarios to bend your players' minds. Lovecraft's sto-

ries often hint at the act of cannibalism. One story in particular, *The Rats in the Walls*, is a perfect starting place for a Keeper interested in building a setting where the dread builds slowly until the players finally uncover the awful truth. Merely referencing historical reports and the assumptions of anthropologists can lead to a multitude of scenes and encounters incorporating cannibalism. The amount of terror that can be instilled in the players is limited only by the imagination of the Keeper.

One obvious choice would be to expose players to the personal horror and temptation by thrusting them into dire circumstances, stranding them in an inhospitable environment with little food or water. This can wrench their emotions, and force them into mental anguish about the moral implications of their human instincts to survive. However, this route may become frustrating for less mature players in who the important skill of empathy is not highly developed. Or perhaps they are stranded on an island inhabited by cannibals who raid neighboring island villages for sustenance. The players must spend their time hiding from the terrors who hunt them while attempting to eke out a meager existence until rescued.

The more interesting path is the discovery of ritualistic practices. In this case, build the plot slowly, with vague hints as the investigation gets underway. Slowly the implications of separate pieces of evidence should begin to arouse dread suspicions within the players. Don't make the clues very obvious either. String the players along and place some red herrings to temporarily lull them into a false sense of security. Let them simmer and stew about what is really going on. As their host, you must create an entertaining scenario; however, you should not give away a single scrap of information that will serve the answer to the mystery on a platter. Not a shred of substantial proof should be located until the cult's sanctum is entered. Build their fears slowly to a crescendo of terror. In the horrifying moments after the lid is pulled off the pot, the boiling steam should waft into their nostrils and true terror will well up within them as some recognizable gobbet rises into view at the surface.

Exotic and remote locals are perfect settings for the gruesome discovery of cannibal tribes or cults. Native tribes and primitive peoples have quite different motivations from us and are therefore a source of intrigue.

Another scenario could bridge the gap between the ancient past and the present. Egypt contains many mysteries which have lain hidden in the sands. An archeologist has recovered a series of occult scrolls on papyrus which instruct the user in rituals to obtain knowledge from the minds of others. This leads the power-hungry archeologist on a quest to gain hidden secrets from rivals by performing the ritual and consuming their hearts. The players could be drawn into the action by an antiquarian with whom they are familiar. The antiquarian is concerned over the unsolved disappearance of an archeologist who supplies him with goods from the Nile Valley and hires the investigators to discover his whereabouts.

Perhaps an even more interesting setting is one where the players would never suspect that cannibalism is involved, for instance, a modern, urban setting. A group of demented homeless persons in a major city are sick of living on the scraps of humanity. They have ceased to beg for food and have instead begun to take it by force. The story could involve the exploration of social strata and the "eat the rich" mentality. When a wealthy benefactor of the characters turns up missing, the players discover from the authorities that they assume that he is dead since only the hands were found in a dumpster in a dark and graffiti covered alley. The police have identified the benefactor by a ring left on one hand. The investigation will eventually lead into the network of tunnels that adjoin the subway, where the players learn the chilling truth.

Remember that the best horror is based in reality. Create a well-researched setting for your game and base the characters in real life situations. Give them jobs and families. When they uncover the depravity that potentially lies within each of us, the horror will be much more horrifying. Send the invitations. Set the table. Pour the drinks. Make your guests comfortable, and prepare yourself for a feast of terror.

Bon Appetite!

❑

POISON!

Desirable Uses for Undesirable Substances

by Matt Brebner

Poison is described in the AD&D® rulebooks as "the bane of all characters." It is a great leveler, since no matter how powerful your character is, a failed saving throw against poison can doom him or her within minutes. But the use of poison tends to be the DM's prerogative, since no PC class can employ it freely. Its use is regarded as inherently evil and must be shunned by good characters; even evil characters who use it run the risk of exposure and summary punishment when doing so.

If we look closer, however, there is room to argue that poison can and should be used by player characters. Why should neutral characters who encounter it not be able to use it in return? Is this not within their concept of keeping things in balance? What about a character who employs the spell *sticks to snakes*? At least half of the snakes created by a high level priest are likely to be venomous. Is this not using poison?

This article surveys the sources of poison typically encountered within the AD&D game, and then offers guidelines for possible use by non-evil PCs.

Encountering Poison

Poison tends to appear in one of three ways. First, it can be encountered as part of a mechanical trap, whether using projectiles such as arrows, or immobile "contact points" such as caltrops or contact poison on treasure. Second, it can be found within specific articles of treasure, such as potions or daggers of venom. Third, it may be used as a weapon by an extensive list of monsters. This list includes human NPCs and humanoids (assassins of all races, plus sprites and drow); monsters such as manscorpions, neogi, thri-kreen and medusae; plants, including fungi (tri-flowers, retch plants, ascomoids); and all sizes of insects, amphibians, arachnids, arthropods, mammals and reptiles. [For this article we've omitted magical noxious vapors such as gorgon breath.]

Poison not only appears from a huge variety of sources; it also comes in a large number of forms, classed according to potency. The DMG uses 16 classes, with three methods of delivery: injected, ingested, and contact (the latter being "by far the most deadly").

Onset times for each class vary greatly, as can damage for non-lethal poisons. It is noteworthy that only four these sixteen classes cause death. Several others, however, can kill through the amount of damage they inflict if the save is failed. Only one class, F, is an all-or-nothing poison, i.e.. if you save, you take no damage; if you fail, you die.

That's serious stuff. But a read through the Monstrous Manual shows many alternative poison effects to death. Class F poison is common, but by no means in the majority. Alternative effects and examples of the creatures which inflict them are listed on the table below.

The table is just a sample of organic poisons that may be encountered. Together with treasure and traps, these make an array of poisons available to the DM.

What then would be acceptable uses of poison by a non-evil PC?

Obtaining Useful Poisons

Imagine a chaotic neutral thief who takes her portion of treasure as a *dagger of venom+1*. She finds an apothecary and commissions him to convert the poison within the dagger's handle to a non-lethal drug, one that operates like a *slow* spell on any affected creature. The DM, using his best judgment, rolls the chemist's skill, assigning him a 65% chance of suc-

POISON EFFECT	SOURCE CREATURE	METHOD	DURATION
slows victim	mustard jelly	inhalation	1d8+ rounds
	neogi	injection	2+ rounds
sleep	sprite	injection	1d6 hrs
unconscious/coma	drow	injection	2d4 hrs
	gargantuan spider	injection	2d4 turns
	giant poisonous toad	injection	24 hrs
	pseudodragon	injection	1d6 days
	tri-flower	injection	1d4 hrs
blindness	spitting snake	contact	2-12 hrs
dexterity loss	hairy spider	injection	1d4+1 rounds
	skunk	inhalation	1d4 rounds
paralysis	centipede (huge/giant)	injection	1d6/2d6 hrs
	heway (large snake)	ingested	1d6 hrs
	hornet, wasp (giant)	injection	2d6 hrs
	land urchins	injection	6 turns
	storoper	injection	1round + charm
	watch spider	injection	2d4 turns
weakness (str loss)	gloomwing	inhalation	1 point/round
	retch plant	inhalation	-50% for 1 hr
	roper	contact	-50% 2d4 tns

cess, at an estimated cost of 1,800 gp up front. The process will take three weeks.

Meanwhile the thief searches for a craftsman to adjust the injection mechanism of the empty dagger to voluntary control, rather than its original random form. The DM determines that after two nights of paying for drinks at the local tavern, the PC discovers an obliging locksmith who can complete the job in a single day, for the modest fee of 30 gp. Finally, the DM checks that the dagger's mechanism survives a 20% chance of being ruined during the process.

So after three weeks our thief comes away with a new weapon, a *dagger of sloth +1*. It can inject three doses of a toxin which will slow an opponent who fails a save vs. poison (not vs. magic). The DM also determines that a +1 bonus applies to the save, since the original poison was diluted, and that the slow effect lasts for a maximum of 2d4 rounds.

A similar approach could apply to many poisons a PC party encounters. With a bit of ingenuity, enterprising PCs can turn hazards they encounter into a variety of new weapons and defenses. Why not allow players to design their own simple "plunger" heads for arrows, bolts, or javelins that convert them to hypodermic projectiles? An archer who has survived giant spiders, hornets or even storoper attacks could use extracted venom to create a non-magical arrow of paralyzation. Why not have ceramic sling bullets or crystalline vials capable of storing the various contact venoms that monsters use?

Another Example

In another hypothetical case, a druid pays to have a vial of lethal poison diluted with *oil of timelessness* to keep the poison virulent, then mixes it with an abraded coin that has had *continual light* cast on it. Thus, she has luminescent filings. If this mixture were vacuum-sealed in a clay casing (possible even with medieval technology), she could produce a stink grenade that could produce a radiant cloud with similar effects to a *glitterdust* and *stinking cloud*. The DM might rule that it has only a 10x10x10' area of effect, a 2d4 round duration, and a 60' range, but a victim caught by it would not only be nauseated, but perhaps suffering under spell-like effects of a *faerie fire* and *blindness* for its duration, subject to appropriate saves.

Such ideas rely on good communication between players and DM, and adequate preparation by PCs prior to adventuring. What gear would they require? Any PC ready to collect toxins would need the appropriate equipment for handling and storing them, such as leather gloves, surgical tools, ceramic screwtop jars and crystal vials. These latter items would need shatterproof protection and would not be cheap.

Nor would obtaining poison from a dead snake be a simple case of cutting off its head and storing it in a jar for later extraction—the organic venom would require preservation to retain its virulence longer than a few hours. This would be another good use for *oil of timelessness*, or even a *preserve* cantrip. Also, anatomical knowledge of the creature from which the poison glands are to be extracted would be required. A character couldn't just load up his plunger arrow with the venom from the phase spider he just killed and fire away at his next target. The process would be time-consuming and messy, if not downright risky.

But innovation often is risky, and this encourages players to find ways around difficulties. A *speak with animals* spell combined with a *ring of reptile control* could enable a PC to ask a cobra to allow itself to be milked of its venom. Why not?

Rules of Thumb

Having suggested freer use of poison by player characters, a word of caution is in order. Poison will get out of control if every dangerous opponent is dropped or paralyzed before it could play its part. A few rules of thumb include:

1) Poison employed by PCs is automatically one grade less virulent than its original source, reflecting degradation during the extraction process:
- lethal poisons (including Classes E, F, J and N) now put victims into a coma;
- coma-inducing poisons now result in normal sleep;
- sleep/paralyzing poisons now result in slow effects;
- other debilitations (blindness, strength or dexterity loss) have their effects and duration reduced, e.g. blindness for 2d6 hrs becomes blurred vision (-2 to hit and AC) for 2d6 turns;
- major damage (16+ hit points) now results in minor damage (<16hp); and
- minor damage (<16hp) results in lesser damage, e.g. 2d6 becomes 2d4.

2) Any creature is automatically immune to its own poison (with exceptions determined by the DM or noted specifically in the monster's description, such as giant scorpions).

3) On-the-spot transfer of venom from a freshly-killed creature to a container is possible, but might require either a proficiency check assigned by the DM or anatomical knowledge such as that possessed by a druid or ranger. Otherwise the PC runs the risk of coming into direct contact with the poison. (One solution is to treat the situation as a thief's attempt to deactivate a trap, treating the extracting PC as a thief of the same level.)

4) Equipment such as arrows with plunger heads require sketches/designs beforehand and should be limited in number—a maximum of three per archer. Only those that hit their target should be reusable and there should be a 10% chance per AC value lower than AC 8 for the plunger head being ruined, i.e. AC 3 means a 50% chance of destruction.

5) Cost, processing time and chance of success for doctoring poisons and having special equipment made should approximate spell research expenses.

So talk to your DM, then go give 'em a taste of their own medicine! ❑

The gentle art of

Foodomancy

by Kurt Samson

Shadows from the fireplace danced upon the walls of Lord Raventree's private chambers. Selune shed its light in this room as well, filtering in through the west window. He looked out upon the docks of Waterdeep. The moon was round and full, painting everything with a tinge of blue. The Endless Sea sparkled as brightly all the stars in the sky.

The sound of his chamber door opening disturbed the tranquility, but told him that his package had arrived. A servant in his house's attire placed an unattractive leather tome on Lord Raventree's nightstand and left without a word. If his heart raced, he kept his dignity and poise, even in the privacy of his own room. He slowly walked to the nightstand, careful not to wake his wife, and took the book into his hands. Then, back at his seat, had a sip of his silvery-green Undermountain Alurlyath, and began reading the handwritten text:

Hail to ye who read my works! One is wise if he seek my knowledge, for I am Jonathan Greenleaf, a disciple of the Art as well as an extraordinary chef (which, as you will find, works surprisingly well together!). This is the first of my written tomes which discloses my findings on the school of "Foodomancy." Not a terribly sharp title I suppose, but it will have to suffice until I think up something wittier.

Foodomancy is based on the principle that the Art can be found in everything. Although a common thought shared by many common people, Foodomancy takes this idea to another tier: the more fantastic a creature or object, the more likely it is to have an aura of magic. But how are we to harness such magical power? I'd hate to oversimplify, but the process can be described in three words: we eat it! By digesting certain parts of obviously magical and fantastic creatures, we release some of their innate power, bestowing their magic upon ourselves.

Although the foodomantic process can take up a book all its own, I will merely describe some recipes of the powerful school here. The recipes in this book are magical, but you need not be a wizard to create them. Simply take the listed ingredients, serve them up as described, and you have an enchantment waiting to be savored!

Be forewarned: many of these ingredients can't be found just by strolling down some marketplace (except perhaps in Skullport). I myself had many adventuring companions die while protecting me from my ingredients!

Keep in mind that the enchantments

Dragonblood Soup

Ingredients

- Four wineskins of red dragon's blood (or a similar measurement)
- Two wineskins of water
- Five handfuls of dragonflesh
- Unsalted butter
- Shredded dragon's heart (must be from the same dragon as the blood)
- Carrots, celery, and thyme

Preparation

Pour thy red dragon's blood into a goodly sized cauldron. Dice thy celery and carrots, and shred thy thyme until ye have a handful of that stuff. Next, take thy fresh dragon meat and hack it into pieces about the size of one's big toe. Forget not to grease the cauldron with the butter and such.

Invocation

After all ingredients have been prepared correctly, take thy wineskins and empty them into the pot. Kindle a fire under the cauldron and allow the Bloodsoup to boil for about 15-20 minutes. When the soup boils, toss in the meat, celery, carrots, thyme, and whatever be left of the butter. Let the contents boil for 20 more minutes. Ye should be sure that the total time of cooking takes no more than three hours lest the inherit magic in the blood and flesh fade. If prepared and cooked correctly, the ingredients should release their enchantments into thy soup. Whosoever shall eat this delicious entree will have bestowed upon them the following abilities:

- Protection from fire (I assume that the protection depends upon the dragon type and its breath weapon)
- The diner's skin takes on the density and hardness of the dragon devoured
- A breath weapon (as of the dragon eaten. The power of the breath is equal to a very young dragon, usually a hatchling). This ability can be used once per serving.

art by Tom Ko

wear off once the food leaves the digestive system and goes into the, er, wild. In any case, I wish you Tymora's blessing in creating these recipes (even more so in acquiring the actual ingredients!).

Dragonblood Soup

It is a well-known fact (among sages) that dragon's blood is magical and can bestow various enchantments upon its drinker. So, in the hours following a brutal battle against several furious red dragons, I concocted this delicious soup.

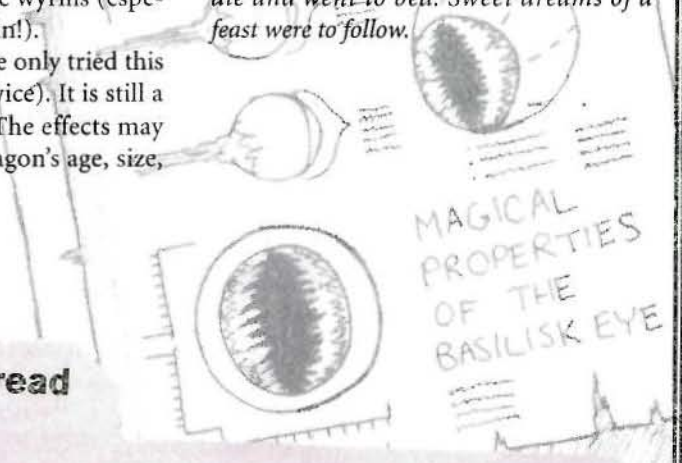
Unfortunately, I am not sure if this recipe varies between dragon colors. Until I can experiment with them all, I assume they are all prepared in the same manner. I truly doubt, however, that my companions will allow me to experiment with the different metallic wyrms (especially that irritating paladin!).

Note again that I have only tried this recipe once (and failed twice). It is still a highly unexplored dish. The effects may differ depending on a dragon's age, size, and type.

Basilisk and Bread

Derive the ingredients for this recipe from the lesser sort of basilisk, lest ye die of food poisoning. The dish must be prepared exactly as written. Failure to do so may result in ill events. Even though this culinary treat is known as basilisk and bread, a variety of other ingredients invoke various effects. It makes for a formidable "sand witch" as well. Enjoy!

Lord Raventree closed the book, careful not to rip the worn pages. He stared long and thoughtfully at the book's leather binding, then placed it on his nightstand. This Jonathan Greenleaf, he thought to himself, can be of great value. I do suppose I have room on the staff for one more cook. With a slight smirk, he blew out the flickering candle and went to bed. Sweet dreams of a feast were to follow.



Basilisk & Bread

Ingredients

- Two basilisk eyes
- Two slices of bread of any variety (I prefer elven myself)
- Death cheese
- A magical fire source

Preparation

First of all, take thy cheese and slice all finely so that it may fit in thine bread. Slice thy bread as well. Take a sharp blade, preferably a scalpel or blade of eastern origins. An enchanted dagger or short sword can fare you just as well. Cut precisely as it is directed in this diagram (I found it in the ancient *Manual of Culinary Delights*).

The Invocation

Put ye basilisk eyes and death cheese in between bread, then toast in magical flame until golden brown. If not petrified, you may gain the following abilities:

- enchantment upon your body similar to the spell stoneskin, effective for one to eight attacks against thyself.
- gaze abilities similar to those of the basilisk. It does not, however, extend into other planes of existence. Take it from me, surprise tests on thy friends can bring about much discord! This can be done once, at any time you wish (until, that is, the deities of nature call to you).
- Have a magical flame at thy hand (wood kindled by magical flame is good).

How to Be a Foodomancer:

Foodomancy is a skill for those who study cooking extensively and have a knack for magic. To prepare magical recipes, you must gain proficiencies.

Foodomancy One

1 slot, Intelligence, -1 modifier.
Classes: Mages, Clerics, Thieves, Paladins, Rangers, and Bards
Cooking proficiency is a prerequisite. This allows any PC or NPC to be capable of basic foodomancy. Foodomancy gives the requirements for a successful recipe without the ability to create recipes.
If cooking a recipe for the first time, the PC receives a -6 modifier. If successful, the cook receives only a -2 modifier for that recipe in the future. Failure indicates difficulty with that particular dish, and the foodomancer must wait until next level before trying again.

Foodomancy Two

2 slots, Intelligence, -1 modifier
Foodomancy One is a prerequisite. This proficiency deals with ingredient identification. On a successful check, a PC can properly identify the general species of a meat (snakemeat, dragonmeat, beef, etc.), fruit (apple, orange, etc.) or vegetable. If the food is foreign or exotic, adjust modifiers appropriately. This proficiency gives a +1 modifier to Foodomancy One.

Foodomancy Three

2 slots, Intelligence, -4 modifier
Foodomancy Two is a prerequisite. This proficiency deals with the theories and laws governing Foodomancy. One must study under a master foodomancer, which is quite rare. If a Foodomancy Three check succeeds, then the foodomancer has concocted a new dish. If it fails, the foodomancer finds that something is wrong with the formula and must be cooked again once he or she gains another level. DMs are encouraged to let a good recipe succeed from a player, but must have ingredients that fit the enchantment. In fact, the creation of a new recipe could be an adventure in itself.

the '99 Decathlon

It's Decathlon time again. Time to stretch your creativity. Time to do good works for others. Time to shove it in the face of those other namby-pamby club gamer wanna-bes.

As part of the Network Club Program, the Decathlon gives clubs the chance to compete against other clubs which tends to promote all-around club activity and growth. Sometimes that interaction involves taunting and good-natured name-calling. That's okay with us.

In 1999, our new Retail Coordinator, Scott Magner, will oversee the Clubs program, the Decathlon, and ensure that results are posted in a timely manner. Club members will be able to view the Decathlon standings online without waiting for a report in POLYHEDRON® Magazine. We will also include the results in Club mailings.

The Fame and Prizes Part

The winning club receives the fabulous big trophy and a huge selection of new gaming products. In addition, we will profile the club in an issue of POLYHEDRON. The second place club takes home a really great trophy and new gaming products. The third place club wins a very nice trophy and a small selection of gaming products. All clubs who earn at least 10 points receive a nice prize. All prizes will be awarded at the Awards Ceremony at the WINTER FANTASY™ convention in February 2000.

How to Play

To make the Decathlon seem more like things are happening, we redesigned the competition (again) to spread deadlines out. Clubs can enter short writing events and service events and see the results sooner than year end.

To participate, a club chooses up to ten events from the list on the next two pages. A club must enter one tournament event, up to a maximum of four tournament events. Further, a club must enter at least one service event. All other entries come from creative and service events. Points are totaled for all events and the club with the most points at the end of the year wins.

The downside of this great variety is that the entry process becomes more complex. We'll try to keep things simple, but forms are required. You have been warned.

- To enter tournament events, HQ must receive two weeks advance notice. This notice can come by email or by form, but the RPGA numbers of all participants must be included along with the convention name. Entrant(s) can be changed at the last minute in case of emergency, but notice must be received in HQ on the Monday following the convention. Players need not write anything on the tournament packet. Tournament results will be posted when scoring packets are received at HQ.
- To enter creative events, submit the entry with a decathlon form and standard disclosure form. If you submit by email, attach the file and note the event you are entering. Submissions must be *received* by the deadline noted, not postmarked by the deadline.
- Service events can be entered any time until the deadline for the event using the form or by email. The club name and event entered are the only required pieces of information, but again, HQ must receive notice by the deadline. The database tracks points for these events automatically, so you won't lose out for entering late.

Note that club members must participate in all events on behalf of the club. A club member is defined as an RPGA member who is listed in the database as belonging to that club. RPGA members who belong to more than one club can only participate in the Decathlon on behalf of the club to which they are registered in the database. This is because the database automatically tracks many aspects of the competition, and we'd like not to confuse it.

Tournament Play

Clubs may enter up to four tournament events. One of the four must be team play, but the other four can be individual or team play events. A different club member must play in each individual event.

Several clubs may get points from the same tournament, but only one club member from your club can enter a given tournament. Pick from the convention list at right; they've been chosen so that they almost everyone has a chance to get to some of them. If the player doesn't show up and no replacement is designated, then the club can enter a different tournament event later.

Individual Play
First place: 4 points
Second place: 2 points
Participation: 1 point

Team Play
First place: 5 points
Second place: 3 points
Participation: 1 points
Results posted by: when we process scoring packs for the convention.

All specific tournament information will be posted on the website and in POLYHEDRON as soon as events for the convention are confirmed. Conventions may be added to this list later on, especially in event-less regions. If you wish to have conventions added, please contact HQ.

Creative Events

The events below allow for club members to show their creativity on behalf of the group. Clubs can enter each event more than once, but each individual person may only submit one entry to any single event (one person can submit in multiple events, though).

For example, Smedley can submit only one monster for the *New Monster* event, but he can still submit one tournament and one character too. In cases where co-creating happens (two people working on a tournament), both must be club members. Lastly, a single club member can't contribute to more than three creative events. Come on, the idea is for the whole club to participate.

Choose the events which best fit your club members' talents. There is an event due every month through September. Winning entries in some categories will be published in the POLYHEDRON Magazine soon after the judging is completed.

Best Character in a system besides the AD&D® game
Deadline: January 31
First place: 4 points
Second place: 2 points
Participation: 1 point
Results posted by: February 15

Create a character in any game system other than AD&D. It can be a NPC or a PC. The submission must include stats and a character background and personality. Characters will be judged on originality and how interesting you make them, not on how powerful they are.

Best New Technological Item for a Sci-fi Game
Deadline: February 28
First place: 4 points
Second place: 2 points
Participation: 1 point
Results posted by: March 15

With the ALTERNITY® science-fiction roleplaying game out, interest in techie toys has increased at HQ. Not that we aren't already into

CONVENTION	STATE	MONTH	TOURNAMENT TYPE
Genghis Con	*CO*	*Feb*	*Individual*
OrcCon	*CA*	*Feb*	*Individual*
WINTER FANTASY™ Show	*IL*	*Feb*	*Individual and Team*
Megacon/Sunquest	*FL*	*March*	*Individual*
Weekend in Ravens Bluff	*All over*	*April*	*Individual*
Ben Con	*CO*	*May*	*Individual and Team*
Three Rivers Game Fest	*PA*	*May*	*Individual*
*Dragon*Con*	*GA*	*July*	*Individual and Team*
Origins	*OH*	*July*	*Individual and Team*
GEN CON® Game Fair	*WI*	*August*	*Individual and Team*
San Diego Comicon	*CA*	*August*	*Individual*
Dreamation	*NJ*	*September*	*Individual and Team*
AndCon	*OH*	*October*	*Individual*
ShaunCon	*MO*	*November*	*Individual*

cool gadgets. So make one for us. Scale models aren't needed, but stats and item effects are. Also, describe who might use it, and whether it is common or extremely hard to get a hold of. (3-D models are accepted, by the way).

Best Newsletter for the First Quarter
Deadline: March 31
First place: 4 points
Second place: 2 points
Participation: 1 point
Results posted by: April 15

Club newsletters are good for keeping club members in touch, and this event recognizes the best among them. Submit an issue of your club newsletter by the deadline. One issue. That's it. The issue must be one you actually sent to your club members. The newsletters will be judged on content, presentation, and how much fun they are to read.Yeah, it's subjective. So entertain us.

Best AD&D Game New Monster
Deadline: March 31
First place: 4 points
Second place: 2 points
Participation: 1 point
Results posted by: April 15

Create a monster for the AD&D game. The sky's the limit on what you can make, but usability in the game and balance are important criteria in judging.

One Round Tournament
Deadline: April 30
First place: 5 points
Second place: 3 points
Participation: 1 point
Results posted by: May 15

Write a one-round tournament in any game system we use in the tournament program. The tournament must include six or more well-developed encounters and necessary maps. Player characters are required when applicable. It may be designated for a specific convention.

Submit a disk copy of the submission in a format readable by MS Word (we recommend .rtf), a printout of the submission, and the necessary forms. All entries must adhere to the RPGA Standards of Content as published in the Membership Handbook and on the website, and for gosh sakes, run it through a spelling and grammar checker. All stat blocks must be correct. Entries should not exceed 15,000 words, not including characters. When writing, try to strike a balance between including the necessary information and being wordy.

Best Club Website
Deadline: May 31
First place: 4 points
Second place: 2 points
Participation: 1 point
Results posted by: June 15

This event recognizes club creation on the world wide web. Submit your web address by the deadline. We'll cruise the sites, and judge them on the same criteria as newsletters: information content, presentation, and enjoyment.

Best New Decathlon Event
Deadline: June 30
First place: 4 points
Second place: 2 points
Participation: 1 point
Results posted by: July 15

Every year we make up these events, and it's not easy, believe us. Now it's your turn. Propose a Decathlon event of any kind, in the format shown in this article. It can be as wild as you want, but it must be something a club can do, preferably something that takes more than one person to accomplish. We'll make the best events part of next year's competition.

Multi-Round Tournament
Deadline: July 31
First place: 6 points
Second place: 4 points
Participation: 2 points
Results posted by: August 31

See the One-round Tournament Event description. Apply the requirements to each tournament round in a multi-round event.

Best Report on the GEN CON Game Fair
Deadline: August 25
First place: 4 points
Second place: 2 points
Participation: 1 point
Results posted by: September 15

Write a report on the GEN CON Game Fair for us. Include major events, anything interesting to you, and anything someone else would be interested in (funny stories, high weirdness). Fit all this into 1,000 words or less. Entries will be judged on how well they captured the spirit of the Game Fair, and how well you mix facts with interesting writing to create a review that might attract others to go next year. Don't write a promo piece; think news story. Remember, an entry where the author goes on for 1,000 words about how GEN CON sucks probably won't win.

Best Proposal for Club-controlled LIVING™ campaign
Deadline: September 30
First place: 5 points
Second place: 3 points
Participation: 1 points
Results posted by: October 31

"If we did a LIVING Campaign, it'd be like this...." So do one

the '99 Decathlon

already! Generally we create LIVING campaigns, but we'd like to see how you do. Create a LIVING campaign in any game system except Paranoia (trust me, the campaign wouldn't last, and you'd lose the category). Describe the setting you'll use, how to create characters, how you'll administer the campaign (tournaments, metagame activities, online, PBM, magic or other special item procedures, whatever). You don't need to be really detailed; just give us the basic idea for what you'd do. Try not to copy what we've already done. You won't get any points for that. If you have questions about what's already "done," contact HQ. If your club already has one up and running, submit it! It counts!

At least five club members must be involved in the campaign creation and management, and you can't ask for help from HQ in your design process. Look at the existing LIVING Campaigns as examples. You don't have to run the campaign, just write it up. The whole document can't be longer than 20,000 words.

Submit the campaign electronically (it's easier to count the words that way).

The big prize for this one, aside from the points, is that we might sanction your campaign and let you run it for ranking points if it's good.

Service Events

Service events give club members a chance to give something back to the Network and to the community. Clubs must enter one of these to win the Decathlon, and may enter as many as they like in the overall category requirements.

Most Tournament Rounds Judged
Event Periods: January 1 to May 31, June 1 to November 30

First place: 4 points
Second place: 2 points
Participation: 1 point

Results posted by: July 15 for the first period. Points for the second period won't be posted until announcement of Decathlon winners.

All rounds of scored and posted Network events judged by club members during the event period qualify. Don't worry about writing on the scoring pack; we'll find judging occurrences by RPGA number. As with last year, this event is normalized by club size, so the results will be in terms of average number of rounds judged per club member. Points will be awarded for each of the two periods listed above. The delay in posting for the first season is to allow us time to process scoring packs from conventions late in May.

Most Service to the Network
Event Periods: January 1 to April 30, May 1 to July 31, August 1 to November 30

First place: 4 points
Second place: 2 points
Participation: 1 point

Results posted by: May 15, first period; August 30, second period. Third period points won't be posted until Decathlon winners are announced.

Service points earned by all club members will be totaled at the end of the event period, and averaged by club size. Reporting will be in terms of average service points earned per club member. All instances of service have to be reported, but there is no form necessary. Service at conventions must be reported by the convention RPGA coordinator. Service to programs (such as volunteering) or to the LIVING campaigns must be reported by the appropriate person in charge (Campaign Coordinator, program coordinator, or Regional Director depending on the situation). We won't chase these down; it is your responsibility to make sure service instances get reported by the deadline. You can earn service points for almost anything you do for the Network; let us know how you served and we'll put up points. Decathlon points will be awarded for each of the three periods listed above.

Min-Max Section

So, the most points a club can earn are:
Tournament Play: 4 team events for 20 points
Creative Events: win the three big-point events for a total of 16 points
All other: win three events from service or creative categories, each worth 4 points each, for a total of 12 points

Grand total: 48 points

The fewest points available for a club entering 10 events is 10 points, and you get a nice consolation prize at 10 points. So enter ten events to get something. That's pretty good.

❑

Event Calendar

This chart shows what events are due when, and how many points are at stake.

January	February	March	April	May
4 total pts	**21 total pts**	**12 total pts**	**13 total pts**	**17 total pts**
Non-AD&D Character: 4	Genghis Play: 4 OrcCon Play: 4 WINTER FANTASY Play: 4/5 Techno Item: 4	Megacon/Sunquest Play: 4 Club Newsletter: 4 AD&D Monster: 4	WIRB Play: 4 One-round Tournament: 5 Most Service I: 4	Ben Con Play: 4/5 Three Rivers Play: 4 Club Website: 4 Rounds Judged I: 4

June	July	August	September	October	November
4 total pts	**28 total pts**	**17 total pts**	**14 total pts**	**4 total pts**	**12 total pts**
New Decathlon Event: 4	Dragon*Con Play: 4/5 Origins Play: 4/5 Multi-round: 6 Most Service II: 4	GEN CON Play: 4/5 San Diego Comic-con Play: 4 GEN CON Report: 4	Dreamation Play: 4/5 Club LIVING campaign: 5	Andcon Play: 4	Shaun Con Play: 4 Rounds Judged II: 4 Most Service III: 4

Living Death™ Rules of Etiquette

Sir Alexander had been a regular guest at the estates of Baron Treldown for almost four months. He was often invited to share dinner with the Baron, his wife, and his neice Lady Alexis. Sir Alexander was still learning, but the social behaviors of the Treldowns made it simple. He had just a few more lessons to learn and he knew just the book that presented them.

The world of the 1890s is one of proper manners. In order for PCs to mix in socially elite circles, they must be familiar with how they are expected to act. Failure to dress or act properly will result in expulsion or exclusion. To help train PCs, we have assembled many of the rules that Sir Alexander learned when he was "blessed" with nobility based on his deeds. "Nobility" was only powerful when recognized in behavior and manner.

Calling Upon Others:

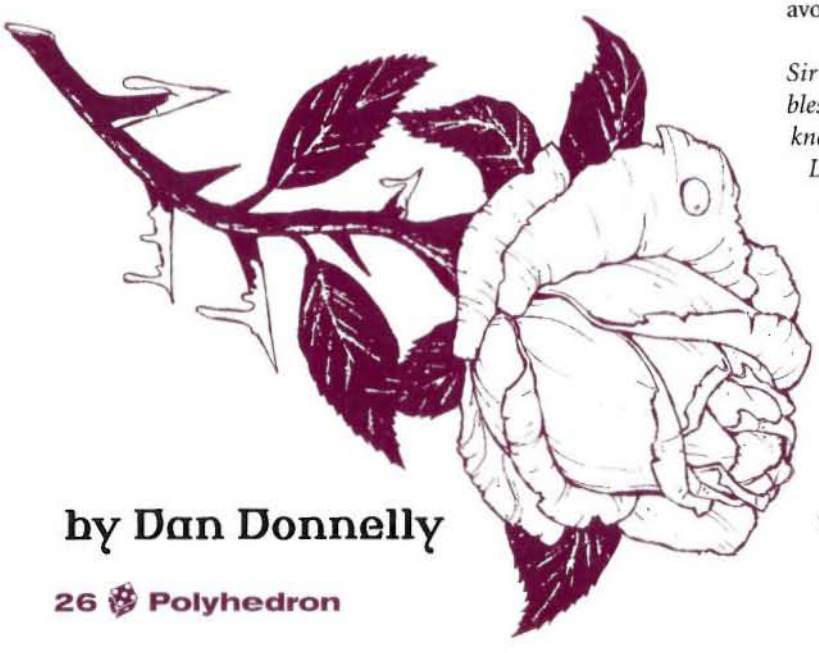
Calling upon another is a formal gathering and should be treated as such:

- Formal calls should be made strictly in the morning, a friendly one later in the evening.
- Always be prompt on your first call.
- In the morning, call after 10 o'clock; in the evening, call no later than eight.
- Do not remove your gloves when making a formal call.

Dinner:

A formal meal separates the refined from the vulgar:

- Gentlemen stand behind their chairs until all ladies are seated.
- Always say "thanks" or "thank you" to the waiter or servant.
- NEVER put your knife into your mouth.
- Beware the noises of eating, lips smacking, noisy breaths or other mouth and throat noises.
- Sservings should garner neither praise nor displeasure.
- All table conversation should be appropriately contained. Whispering or speaking too loudly is equally vulgar.
- Chairs must remain firmly planted on all four legs when seated.
- Your position at the table should allow ample room for those on either side as well as the feet of the person across the table.



Traveling in the 1890s:

Even the way a person traveled could dictate how society treated them:

- Ladies traveling alone while at a hotel should allow a waiter to escort them from the door to their table.
- When entertaining a lady at a theatre or amusement, a gentleman never leaves the lady alone.
- Ladies traveling alone by rail or by sea should consult with the conductor or captain.

Other Events and Occasions:

Two other occasions where etiquette is paramount include funerals and courtships. Since *Masque of the Red Death* characters might very likely find themselves attending a funeral, some guidelines are listed here:

- Wear black clothing or as near to that color as possible.
- Send only white flowers, only on the morning of the funeral.
- Leave cards for the family of the deceased on the week following the funeral.
- Do not arrive at the home of the deceased until invited, and only at the time of the invitation.
- During the funeral do not acknowledge the relatives or other mourners at the funeral.

Courtship patterns include:

- A lady cannot socially accept a present from a gentleman until after receiving the proposal of marriage.
- Any present accepted by a lady must be approved by the lady's parents or guardian.
- The declaration or proposal should always be made in person, never by writing unless unavoidable.
- Once properly engaged, a couple should exhibit no perceivable difference in how they act towards one another or others. Attention and demeanor to those of the opposite gender are not to be avoided, but should show the proper courtesy and friendship.

Sir Alexander took a deep breath, silently. Having received the blessing of Baron Treldown to speak with his niece, Sir Alexander knew he could harbor no doubts. Politely and delicately he asked Lady Alexis if she would consent to be his wife. "Sir Alexander, I am most honored," claimed Lady Alexis as she gazed into his eyes. "I respect you for your deeds and the manner in which you have become a true member of the nobility. However, I must consider your declaration carefully. I would not want to burden you with the considerable means my uncle allocated for my education and servants. I would, however, be pleased if you would continue to call upon me."

Sir Alexander did not flinch, accepting the refusal with grace and chivalry. It was not a rejection, but he obviously needed to prove himself monetarily as well as socially before Lady Alexis would accept his declaration. It would just take more time. ❑

by Dan Donnelly

Boa vinda Internet 101

by Ed Gibson

Boa vinda Internet a 101 is "Welcome to Internet 101" in Portuguese. This month we're covering internet language resources. Now I don't speak Portuguese, and I'm willing to bet that very few people who are reading this article speak Portuguese either. But that doesn't have to stop you with the tools which are currently available on the Internet.

it goes in your ear

The key tool is *babelfish*, found at <http://babelfish.altavista.digital.com>. Babelfish translates text or web page addresses (URLs) from English to French, German, Italian, Portuguese, or Spanish. It can also translate back into English from any of those languages.

Everything I've read says that babelfish does an adequate job of translation, although the grammar can be somewhat stilted. For this reason, translating a passage into a foreign language and subsequently returning it to English frequently results in slightly different text from the original.

For instance, the sentence, "Upon casting this spell, the wizard causes a vivd, fan-shaped spray of clashing colors to spring forth from his hand." translates to: "Sobre echar este encanto, el mago causa un aerosol vivo, en abanico de colores clashing al resorte adelante de su mano." It re-translates: "On throwing this enchantment, the magical one causes an alive aerosol, in fan of colors clashing to the means in front of its hand."

In other words, you probably don't want to rely on babelfish to do your Spanish homework for you.

"he says... umm...."

This opens up a whole world of opportunity for new and interesting handouts for your players. Instead of telling them that they found a letter, a diary, or a reference book in an unknown language, you can actually hand them one. You can keep names and dates unchanged, giving the players a tantalizing glimpse at the message. The search for a translation becomes an important part of the mission. The emphasis on language skills may encourage your players to develop more rounded PCs, forsaking weapon skills for languages. Like anything else, this technique is best when used in moderation.

it goes in your ear, part 2

You can find another handy foreign language resource at <http://www.travlang.com/languages>. This site can help you to learn standard tourist phrases for travel in a foreign country. They have information on over 60 languages from Afrikaans to Zulu, including Farsi, Hindi, Japanese, and Mandarin. Now you may not care about the native language when your heroes travel to a foreign country, but it seems much more realistic when you replace "Good Morning" and "Good Evening" with the proper local equivalent. The site even offers sound files so you can hear the words pronounced correctly.

As an example here, we'll cover the type of information available from the site in more detail for the Afrikaans language. The web site provides a pronunciation guide for English speakers.

Seven categories of words and phrases are available on the site:

- basic words such as "Yes", "No", "Please", "Thank You", "Good Morning", "Good Evening", and the ever-popular "Where is the bathroom?" (Waar is die badkamer?);
- numbers, from zero to one million;
- shopping/dining, which includes "Breakfast", "Lunch", "Dinner", "Meat", "Coffee", and man's best friend, "Bier";
- travel, including such words as "Subway", "Hotel", and "Airport";
- directions; "Up", "Down", "Right", and "Left", (though there's no entry for "I'm lost.");
- places—"Redmond, Washington" didn't make the list, but "Hospital", "School", "Mountain", and "Lake" did;
- time and dates, including the days of the week, seasons and the months of the year.

but wait, there's more

These examples are only starting points for you to fire up your web browser and check out the entries for a foreign country. Then send your PCs on a trip they won't forget.

As always, you don't want to overdo it, because running a whole roleplaying session in Portugese gets slow and tedious for most people outside of Portugal or Brazil. But even if the heroes are just greeted with "Goeienaand" (Good Evening), you've gone a long way to create a foreign feel to the campaign.

If you have any questions or suggested sites, send them to the editor at <polyhedron@wizards.com>. ❑

URLs you can Use (for your game)

Another useful tool when your PCs are on the road is a currency converter. A good one can be found at <http://www.xe.net/currency>. Enter an amount and type of currency, and then select the currency you want to obtain. Voila.

A possible in-game twist for this web site is to offer the PCs what seems like a large amount of money in a currency which is relatively weak (the Italian lira comes to mind). Once they learn how much their money is actually worth in their native currency, they may be...

Notice: *Anyone* may set up a web site. Some sites include nudity, violence, and racist material. We will not intentionally direct you to offensive sites, but we cannot be responsible if links lead to objectionable material. Parents, please consider programs to limit children's access to information you find offensive. Two products, Netnanny, <http://www.netnanny.com> and Cyberpatrol <http://www.cyberpatrol.com> are available for reasonable prices.

VOTE RIGHT! 2

voting standards for the best player

by Laura Moody Harvey

As many of you may be aware from reading "Vote Right!" last issue, two of the players in my gaming group are an orc and a halfling. In addition, our group membership includes two dwarves, an elf, and one other human beside myself. A couple of weeks ago, I ran a tournament for this group in which we all played halfling characters. The real halfling wasn't too pleased with this. "After all," she contended, "gaming is supposed to be an escape from reality."

After we convinced her to play, we had an interesting and enjoyable game. As you might imagine with such a diverse group of players, we ended up with a wide variety of halfling interpretations. Each was creative and well done, so we had a hard time choosing the best player. In addition to this, we ran into some other problems.

"I certainly hope you don't expect me to vote for one of them," the elf whispered to me, gesturing towards the dwarves.

"Oh dear," chirped the halfling, "Competition just seems so mean-spirited. I think I'll just pick someone at random. Eenie, meenie, minie, moe...."

Across the table, the dwarves grumbled back and forth with each other. "Who are you putting for first? I think this one would be a better choice."

The human handed me his voting sheet with a wink and said, "It's just too bad we can't vote for ourselves."

It became abundantly obvious to me that our little group needed help when it came to voting for the best player. So I went over to my file cabinet and pulled out this vellum scroll. (Actually, it took a little longer than that; the scroll was misfiled under auto insurance.)

TEAMWORK, as the word implies, is the cooperative effort of a group to achieve a common goal. In a gaming situation, teamwork is applicable in two ways: the teamwork between characters and the teamwork between players.

Character teamwork tends to be subjective, as each character has a distinct personality which may or may not include a cooperative nature. As a general rule, however, each character should add to the total enjoyment of the game whetheror not the character is a team player. Even a real scoundrel should in some way work to achieve group goals. A good team character will:

- not intentionally split up the party members.
- not intentionally split the party's loyalties.
- not intentionally harm or alienate another party member.
- take an active role in decision making.
- share in risks and costs (as far as the character's personality allows).

Teamwork among players is much more objective, as players (usually) aren't fictional, and may therefore dictate their own actions. A good team player will:

- not monopolize the attention of the GM.
- not be grabby during the distribution of treasure certificates.
- not lie, cheat, or steal.
- allow others to be the center of attention.
- try to draw out the quiet and inexperienced, so that all have a good time.

The same two elements of **ROLEPLAYING** exist for the player as for the judge: acting and interacting. Acting is the ability of the player to simulate the attitude and actions of his character. An important part of **acting** is "hamming it up". A good actor:

- assumes the body language, voice, facial expressions, and personality of a character.
- occasionally uses props and costumes.
- is not necessarily the loudest one at the table.
- consistently and convincingly portrays the character.

An equally important aspect of acting is character preparation. For the classic character, this means studying the character's background. For the campaign character, it mean creating it. By taking the time to develop a character's past, personality, and motivation, the player can portray a character who seems more vibrant and realistic. Such details might include:

- a childhood history.
- preferences, pet peeves, fears, goals, and habits.
- what drew the character to his current lifestyle.

Interacting is the player's ability to apply a character's personality. A successful player does so consistently and appropriately. For example:

- a berserker doesn't take a moment to solve a riddle in the middle of his rage.
- a painfully shy mage wouldn't be in the middle of every conversation.
- a halfling doesn't stop acting perky just because the player gets tired.

A player who exhibits **STRATEGIC SENSE** via character:

1. uses good sense in combat situations.
2. uses good sense in planning action during the scenario.

Most gamers have seen examples of bad combat strategy, like the mage who casts a

fireball spell in a 10'x10' room. Good combat strategy is just a little rules knowledge and a lot of common sense. Great combat strategy combines good strategy with creativity. A good player would jump into a lake in combat with a fire elemental, but a great player would do something creative, like casting *insatiable thirst* on it.

The planning aspect of strategic sense is the ability to think before acting.

1. Given options, the good player can help determine which encounter to engage in first. ("Perhaps we should see the priest before we go to attack the vampires.")
2. Given time, the good player can plan combat beforehand. ("Sammy, you stay here outside the cave. When we drive the bear out, you attack it!")
3. Given resources, the good player uses them wisely. ("I know the map shows a ferry there on the river, but if we cross at this sandbar we could save ourselves the toll.")

PROBLEM-SOLVING is the ability to deal with any unplanned non-combat situation. Creativity is especially helpful in these situations. Examples of such problems include:

- solving riddles and puzzles.
- deciphering encrypted letters.
- overcoming physical hindrances such as chasms, walls, and vines.
- overcoming lack of resources. ("I don't have a net, but with this *endless ball of string* I could knit one for you.")

Not every character has the proper ability scores to solve every puzzle or knit a net, but everyone can still take part in the problem solving. An excellent example of this was Alexander the Great, who heard an oracle promise that whoever could undo the intricate Gordian knot would be the next ruler of Asia. Alexander did not have the skill to untie it, so he cut it open with his sword. Where one skill failed him, Alexander the Great used another in its stead.

Two areas of **RULES KNOWLEDGE** are relevant to gaming: preparation and spontaneity. In neither case does the player need to memorize the entire library pertaining to a roleplaying system in order to succeed. Careful study of relevant information, along with handy access to details (spell cards, kit information, etc.) can be just as effective.

Prepared rules knowledge refers to information that a player needs to create a character or know his or her classic character. A player with rules knowledge:

- understands the character's class and race well enough to be able to play any special abilities and limitations. ("Hey, I didn't know I could detect evil!")
- has a clear understanding of any spells, weapons, and equipment chosen. ("Oh, I thought a mancatcher did something else.")
- doesn't hold up play searching for information.

Spontaneous rules knowledge is information you must know to get through the unknown factors of a scenario. This is difficult, as you never know what will be thrown at you, and can't just memorize the whole book. However, most of this information is common sense which comes with experience, for example:

- don't mix potions.
- don't shoot a missile weapon into melee.
- know which dragons, religions, races, etc. are good and which are bad.

Occasionally, problems occur when a player has too much rules knowledge. It is inappropriate for a player to use knowledge that the character has not yet acquired. ("Don't ask how I know that it will turn you to stone, just don't look at it.") Also, while suggestions may occasionally be helpful, few appreciate the player who holds up a game to argue rules. A good player avoids both of these situations.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

A few standards apply to the voter him- or herself. They include:

- don't vote as a clique. Just because you've known Bob since kindergarten doesn't make him the best player.
- don't hold grudges. Earl may have wrecked your new 'vette, but if he played well he should score well.
- vote only on the current scenario. Julie did a great job playing her mage, but you're tempted to give her a low vote because you know that she can't play any other character class. You aren't voting for "Best of Con," so give her the score she deserves.
- ask your GM if you could take the time to explain the characters when the game's over. This goes for campaign as well as classic games. You might vote differently with more information.
- remember, you're not voting for the best character, but the best player. The two are often the same, but not always. Don't forget player teamwork.

I can't say that peace has reigned supreme since I shared this treatise on voting with my gaming group. I suspect that the elf is never really going to be able to resolve his prejudices concerning dwarves, and my human friend is at this very moment looking at himself longingly in the mirror. What I can say is that when we began to apply these principles, we started to achieve enough conformity in our voting to give us a clue as to how we're really doing as players. I don't know about you, but I kind of like knowing where I stand, and frankly, the voting whims of a halfling just weren't doing it for me.

editor's note: This is the second of a three-part series on voting standards. Though these "standards" are phrased definitively, they are not intended to be a straitjacket for voting procedures. Use them as a guideline, or a jumping off point for your own discussions on the topic of voting.

Conventions

Featuring Network Sanctioned Tournaments

GEOCARP 99: JUST FOR THE HALIBUT

When: Jan 15-17 **Where:** Lansing, MI–Best Western Governor's Inn
What: RPGA and other RPGs, including original LIVING CITY™, LIVING DEATH™, Virtual Seattle and AD&D® events.
Cost: contact for details
Contact: <http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Realm/1591/geocarp/> <geocarp@iname.com>

COSCON 99

When: Mar 12-14 **Where:** Butler, PA–Days Inn Conference Center
What: LIVING CITY and benefit roleplaying games. Free-form RPGs, CCGs, board games, minis, dealer's room, computer room, movies, guests, more!
Cost: $15 til Feb 25, $25 at door.
Contact: Circle of Swords, P.O. Box 2126, Butler, PA 16003.

EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN '99

When: Mar 26-28 **Where:** Carbondale, IL–Southern Illinois University
What: RPGA events, AD&D, Shadowrun, Warhammer 40K, M:tG, other card, RPG, miniatures, and board games. No event fees!
Cost: $12 pre-reg, $15 at door.
Contact: Joel Nadler at 618/529-4630 or email: <ECGamCon@aol.com> website: <www.siu.edu/~gamesoc>

WEEKEND IN RAVENS BLUFF 5/CONLINE XXXIII

When: April 2-4, 1999 **Where:** Online
What: roleplaying games online!
Cost: free
Contact: Jay Fisher, 2690 Drew Street Apt 1108, Clearwater, FL 33759; 727/724-9313; email: <jlorien@concentric.net>

BEN CON 1999

When: May 20-23 **Where:** Golden, CO–Sheraton Denver West Hotel
What: First run RPGA events! Guests: Margaret Weis, Tracy Hickman, Claire Hoffman. All proceeds go to charity!
Cost: contact for details
Contact: 303/665-7062; email <info@bengames.org>; web site: <http://bengames.org>

MILWAUKEE SUMMER REVEL III

When: Jun 10-13 **Where:** Milwaukee, WI–Best Western Inn Town
What: First Run RPGA including LC, LD, LJ, VS, plus many Classic events! Also Settlers, A&A, Wham-a-Thon and more!
Cost: $30 til Jan 15, $35 after. no event fees
Contact: <www.angelfire.com/wi/summerrevel>

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POLYHEDRON® MAGAZINE
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WEEKEND IN PROCAMPUR

Where:	When:	Contact:
Online	Jan 1-3	Jay Fisher, 727/724-9313 <jlorien@concentric.net> <http://www.concentric.net/~jlorien/conline/index.html>
Orlando, FL	Jan 8-10	Leonard Dessert, 407/207-1991 <lady-n-thewizard@unforettable.com>
Denver, CO	Jan 9-10	Gary S. Watkins, 303/466-2043 <Dragon0525@aol.com> <http://www.bengames.org/~whitet/bencon/>
Waterloo, ON	Jan 9-10	Steve Campey, 519/725-1147
Portland, OR	Jan 15-17	Bob Ehmann, 541/278-0069 <rehmann@ucinet.com>
San Diego, CA	Jan 15-17	Goon Pattanumotana, 619/549-9196 <Gpattanumo@aol.com>
Milwaukee, WI	Jan 22-24	Thomas Terrill, 414/287-5201 <terrillt@execpc.com> <http://www.msoe.edu/st_orgs/gaming/convention.html>
Sacramento, CA	Jan 23-24	Dan Cooper, 916/489-2263 <CaptainHarlock@worldnet.att.net>
Columbus, OH	Jan 23-24	Mark Middleton, 614/771-0547 <mmiddlet@columbus.rr.com>
Norman, OK	Jan 29-31	Melissa Maurer, 405/325-9521 <mmaurer@ou.edu>

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WANTED: SPELLFIRE® Dungeons chase cards 21 & 22. Many chase and rares for trade. Also need BLOOD WARS Lady of Pain. Contact Howard Dawson, 938 Hampton Rd. GP Woods, MI 48236 or call 810/772-2020 during the day.

JOIN THE UCC: The Universe Construction Company is an online RPGA Network Club. In addition to sponsoring major conventions/ game-days online each month, the UCC has been charged to develop the FORGOTTEN REALMS® city of Procampur for TSR, Inc. and the Network's LIVING CITY Campaign. For more information, contact Jay Fisher at <jlorien@concentric.net>.

Players wanted for a FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign being run in Vienna, VA. Newbies to longtime players welcome. The campaign will run twice a month, more or less, depending on players and DM. If interested, please call 703/560-3393 or email me at <threshold101@msn.com>

WANTED: Two mature AD&D® game players, must be 18 years or older, male or female, to join ongoing group of players in the Downriver area of Detroit. If interested, call Richard Hall at 734/285-6025 4 PM to 9 PM M-F, or write: 13698 Walnut St., Southgate, MI 48195-1813.

REWARD! Am looking for DUNGEON Magazine issues #1,2,3,5, and 6. Also, module U1, *Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*. Will pay handsomely for copies of each in good or better condition. If trade is desired, extensive list available: AD&D, GURPS, TOP SECRET®, old and newer stuff. Write Doug Ironside at 253 Centennil Dr., Midland, ON, Canada L4R5H9. Enclose phone number.

FOR SALE: Magic, Illuminati, Netrunner, Star Trek cards. Many rares. Very reasonable. Write Doug Ironside at 253 Centennil Dr., Midland, ON, Canada L4R5H9. Enclose phone number.

FOR SALE: Products I bought new and still unopened for 60% of original cover! Many used items as well! Your postage will be refunded with your first order. Send a business-size SASE with $0.75 postage to: James C. Alpeter, PO Box 143, Syracuse, NY, 13206-0143. Thank you in advance for your interest.

WANTED: *From the Ashes* boxed set, original cover PHBR books, *Scourge of the Slavelords* (A1-4) and *Queen of Spiders* (GDQ1-7). Many items for trade. Also looking for Allan Grant and Ellie Sadler action figures from Jurassic Park. Let's deal, let's trade! (Games should be clean, and figures should be MIP) Write Jim Alpeter, PO Box 143, Syracuse, NY, 13206-0143. Thank you in advance for writing.

GAMERS WANTED: I'm new to the St. Louis area and am looking for mature gamers in the area to start up an AD&D RPGA club. If you are interested please contact: Pierre LaFromboise, 3629 Long Drive, St. Ann MO. 63074;phone: 314/298-0498; or email: <xikilmx@aol.com>.

SOUTH HAMPSHIRE, England! AD&D players wanted to help start a regular once-every-three-weeks all day Sunday game in Fareham. We are a small group of experienced players and DMs in our early 30s, and we need more players to make a viable sized group. Age, sex, and experience are immaterial. If interested, please e-mail Gray at <sharpg@msn.com> or phone after 6:30pm on: 01329-288450 for more information.

ISO 2 SSI computer products for IBM PC. Need Dungeon Masters Assistant Volume 1: Encounters and Volume 2: Characters and Treasures. Must have computer mauals and all disks. Contact: Joe Fisher, PO Box 1318, Veneta, OR 97487. Call: 541/935-1542.

JOIN NOW! Join the Young Adventurer's Club. Every other month you receive: new monsters, new magic items, and other great things. All you have to do is join now! Free! Send your address and $2.00 s&h to The Young Adventurer's Club, 1233 West Third Street, Red Wing, MN 55066. Everyone is welcome! If you want to contribute, just send all materials to the above address c/o Wayne Hansen.

DM SEEKS PLAYERS in Los Angeles area. 2nd ed. AD&D FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign is starting up. This campaign will start at 1st level and work its way up from there. For more info, contact: John Merhar, 1140 Cedar Ave., Long Beach, CA 90813. Email <jmerhar@hotmail.com>.

WANTED, gaming group in the Maryland area. Believe it or not, one medical student with time on his hands *gasp* is looking for a gaming group in the metropolitan DC/Maryland area. Included are the following cities he can travel. Gaithersburg, Bethedsa, Silver Springs, Rockville, Frederick, Washington DC proper, or Germantown. Email Mike Dymond at <s2mdymond@mxd.usuhs.mil>.

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IN SEARCH OF any AD&D monster 15mm pewter figures, unpainted. will pay. Also in search of 9mm plastic army men. will pay 5 cents for each one. email <dougc@tiac.net> or write: Scott, 30 Pasho St., Andover, MA, 01810. Also, does anyone in the Andover area want to start an AD&D group? I'm itching to play with new people.

WANTED TSR's Dungeon Geomorphs Set One: Basic Dungeon, Set Two: Caves & Caverns, Set Three: Lower Dungeons & Outdoor Geomorphs Set One: Walled City. Will pay for any full or partial sets. Contact: Thomas E. Knaak II, P.O. Box 15, Wingate NC 28174 or email <tknaak@interlink-café.com>.

FOR SALE: Run of DRAGON Magazines, starting at The Strategic Review #1 through 150, kept in bags. Best offer & possibly sell in lots. E-mail <shikken@aol.com> or send snail-mail bids to Lloyd Brown, 1271 MacArthur St., Jacksonville, FL 32205-8911. Serious bids only, please remember that shipping that many mags won't be cheap.

MARYLAND: Looking for gamers in southern Prince George's County and Charles County, Maryland who would like to form a Network club. If interested, contact: Bill Brierton, 12420 Old Colony Dr, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-5000. Email: <Kheled@juno.com>.

WANTED: Amateur writers and artist for up-and-coming amateur roleplaying magazine titled, *White Knight*. For more information and artists and writers guidelines, contact: Unicorn Pegasus Productions c/o Bill and Claire Brierton, 12420 Old Colony Dr, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-5000. Email: <Kheled@juno.com>.

WANTED: Pre- #175 DRAGON Magazines, Pre- #25 DUNGEON Magazines, FR2 *Moonshae*, N5 *Under Illefarn*, DA2 *Temple of the Frog*, FA1 *Hall of the High King*, FA2 *Nightmare Keep*, C6 *RPGA Tournament Guide*, OP1 *Tales of the Outer Planes*. Send price list to T. Carpenter, PO Box 973, Easton, PA 18044.

PEN PALS WANTED: Federal inmate looking for people to correspond with about RPGs. I play and DM AD&D and enjoy playing other systems. Also, I'm looking to buy used sourcebooks, boxed sets, and modules for the FORGOTTEN REALMS or GREYHAWK settings. Please send correspondence to: Gregory D. Van Breemen 04412-000, Box 9000, Safford, AZ 85548.

WANTED: MYSTARA®, GREYHAWK® products. I am looking for any and all that I can find. Will pay reasonable amount and shipping fees. Please e-mail me at <LLBarberJr@AOL.com> with info. Or write me at: Larry Barber, 1405 Markham Street, Front Royal, VA 2630

Classifieds...

Reader Response Survey, Issue #133

Please rank each article or section of the magazine from 1-5 with 1 being "Don't kill trees for this." and 5 being "Do it again, boy! Do it again!" Please include any other comments you feel are appropriate. All responses received on or before February 1, 1999 will be entered for a drawing to win a free copy of the *Van Richten's Monster Hunter's Compendium, Volume One* for the RAVENLOFT® campaign setting.Woo-hoo!

	1	2	3	4	5
Demo Team Information	o	o	o	o	o
Notes From HQ	o	o	o	o	o
Your Initiative	o	o	o	o	o
TableTalk: Editorial	o	o	o	o	o
Table Talk: News	o	o	o	o	o
Player and Judge Rankings	o	o	o	o	o
Elminster's Everwinking Eye	o	o	o	o	o
City Stories: The Furrier's Guild	o	o	o	o	o
Planar Recipes	o	o	o	o	o
To Serve Man	o	o	o	o	o
Poison! Desirable Uses for Undesirable Substances	o	o	o	o	o
Foodomancy	o	o	o	o	o
Tassinger's: A restuarant for the 22nd century	o	o	o	o	o
1999 Decathlon Information	o	o	o	o	o
Living Death Etiquette	o	o	o	o	o
Internet 101	o	o	o	o	o
Player Voting Tips	o	o	o	o	o
Classifieds	o	o	o	o	o
Conventions	o	o	o	o	o

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Polyhedron Reader Response #133
P.O. Box 707
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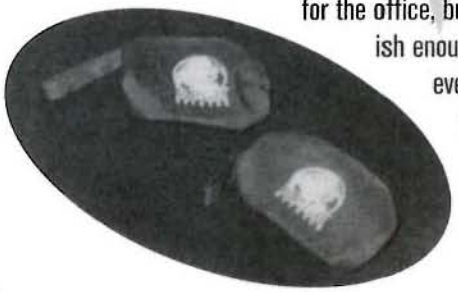
USA

You'll love it. Trust me.

Our new batch of RPGA® merchandise is here! We debuted these beauties at GEN CON® Game Fair, so check them out!

Wear these excessively cool ash sweatshirts with RPGA logo over the heart. Zipper neck or crew neck.

Dice bags come in vibrant red, green, blue, and black which all look gray here! These dice bags sport the RPGA logo in white, on a mini-duffle with a velcro carrying loop. Functional enough for the office, but stylish enough for evening play!



All hipster irony aside, these black baseball caps are **great**. They have a suede bill, with an embroidered RPGA logo on the front.

These messenger-style shoulder bags elicited ooos and aaahs from everyone at the game fair. Inside is room for books, a laptop computer, or one full cert notebook. Comes with pockets for notes, dice, pencils, the works!

Don't forget, back issues are still for sale! They're going fast, so if you want something, don't wait. We're REALLY not kidding!

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Don't know what back issues you want? Get an index from HQ for a buck (US$1), or check it out on our website at <www.tsr.com/rpga>.

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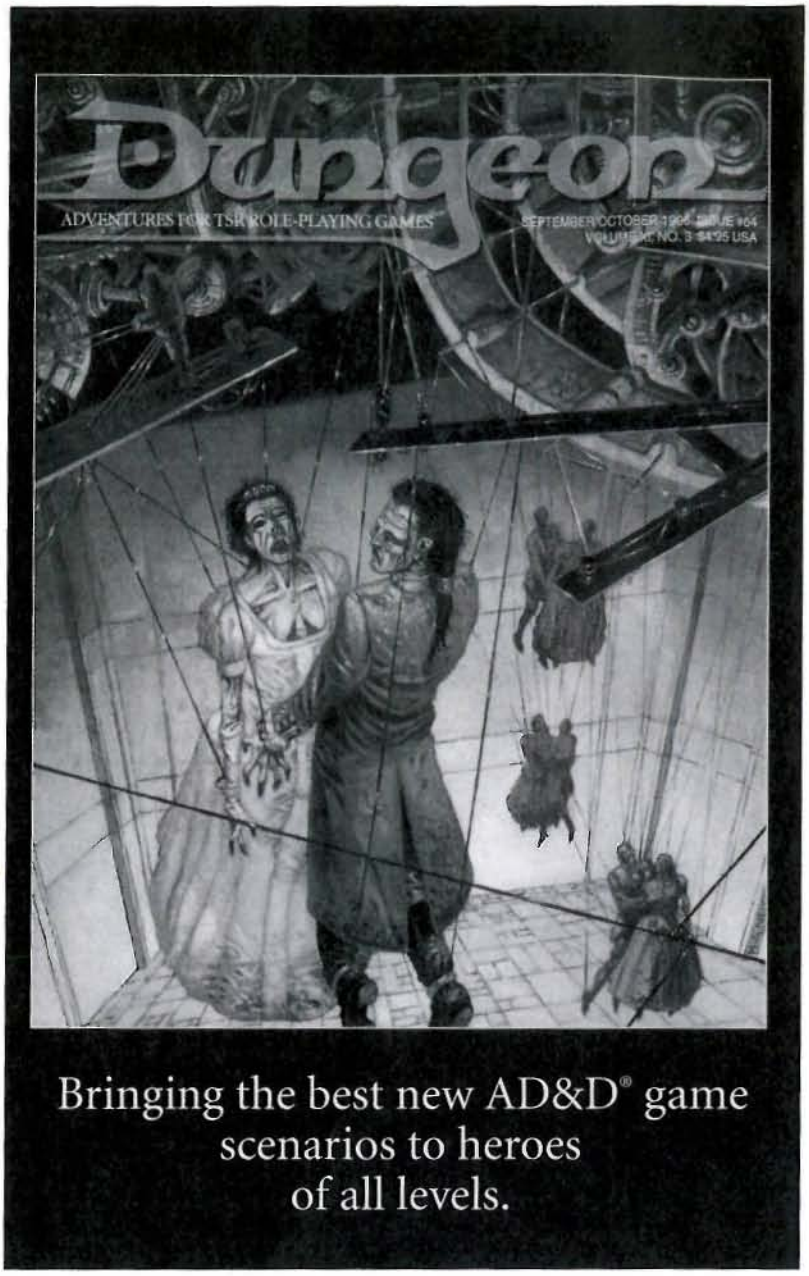

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